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THE DEFENCE OF AN ANACHRONISM

THE Russian proposals for the control of the Dardanelles have at least the merit of clarity. The Note to Turkey suggests that the international control, which lapsed in 1936 when the League of Nations was already in decline, should not be restored. The defence of the Dardanelles should from henceforth be regarded as the exclusive concern of Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Just as the Moscow policy for the Danube is to exclude all non-Danubian Powers, so it is now proposed that Black Sea strategy is a matter for Black Sea Powers alone.

The logic of these propositions is obvious. Turkey, who maintained her neutrality during the war by balancing between the combatants, would virtually forfeit her independence and become a member of the Russian bloc. Thereby the Russians would have created in reverse a *cordon sanitaire*—designed, this time, to exclude hostile capitalist influence. This *cordon sanitaire* would provide a complete Western barrier extending from Finland in the north down to the Turkish-Syrian frontier. Simultaneously, Russia would have rendered virtually useless the British base in Greece and built up a powerful position for pressure against the whole British position in the Levant and Middle East.

Mr. Bevin, therefore, has some cogent arguments for opposing Russian pressure on Turkey as vigorously as he reacted to Russian moves in Persia. He indubitably assumes that the chances of World Government, if they ever existed, have vanished for the time being. The issue now is how Britain can survive in a period of intense rivalry between the two great continental Powers, both of which will soon possess atomic bombs. The Russians and Americans are both busily building up regional systems of security. Each is trying to prevent what it describes as the other's aggressive imperialism. America persuades herself that support for Chiang Kai-shek in China and for Britain in Europe and the Middle East are defensive extensions of pan-American security. The U.S.S.R., apparently convinced that a clash is coming between the Communist and the Capitalist worlds, is fortifying a series of strong points well outside the U.S.S.R.; and simultaneously trying to disrupt the British Empire in order to weaken the Anglo-American bloc.

Since the British Empire, scattered over the whole surface of the globe, cannot form a cohesive continental bloc, Mr. Bevin feels himself compelled to line up with the Americans on the understanding that they take over the defence of certain parts of the Empire. While America resists Russian expansion in the Pacific and so protects Australia and New Zealand, Britain for her part assumes the political and military responsibility in the Levant and Middle East. Hence Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes both regard the Dardanelles as primarily an Anglo-Russian issue in which America will push Britain from the rear.

This policy is one of peculiar danger for Great Britain. An active defence of the Levant and Middle East must involve a very heavy military commitment. We could hardly maintain it even with American aid. It is no use attempting to bluff the Russians. If we are determined to oppose them blankly on the Eastern question, as we opposed them throughout the nineteenth century, and to maintain the integrity of Persia and Turkey (Lord Salisbury's "wrong horse"), we must dispose of sufficient forces in each threatened area to make them realise that we mean business. Can we and ought we to do this?

Those who argue that the diplomatic battle of the Dardanelles must be fought will reply that the route to India and the Middle Eastern oil-fields form a strategic area vital to our existence. Even to hesitate before going to the defence of Turkey and Persia would, they argue, be a policy as suicidal as the sell-out of Czechoslovakia and Spain. To this argument there is a short reply. Atom warfare, which in a single day could destroy London and Liverpool, Suez and Abadan, has made complete nonsense of traditional imperial strategy. Moreover, apart from atom bombs, neither the Middle Eastern oil-fields nor the Suez route could be held for any length of time by land forces, whatever the result of the Egyptian negotiations. No diplomatic campaign on the Dardanelles issue will save the Middle East in the event of war with Russia. By recognising the Russian control of the Black Sea region, we would only be taking account of a shift in the balance of power, which has already taken place and which we cannot reverse, even if we accept the position of senior satellite of the U.S.A.

We believe, therefore, that, before committing himself to an all-out diplomatic defence of the Dardanelles, Mr. Bevin would be well advised to remember that British security cannot be achieved by undertaking unilateral commitments which we obviously cannot fulfil. His bid for American support in Palestine has failed spectacularly and left us far worse off than if it had never been made. Can he expect any better results elsewhere in the Middle East?

It is worth bearing in mind that on the issue of the Dardanelles the Russian case has its cogency. We cannot believe that any American Government, for instance, would ever consent to the control by a Consortium of Powers of the vital Panama area. In a world of regional security the Dardanelles is no more and no less a Russian sphere of influence than Panama is American; and in 1915, both Britain and France were willing to concede this to Tsarist Russia. It is only on the proposition that the continuance of British Imperialism in the Middle East is essential to world peace that Russia's demands appear outrageous. A Socialist Government is surely bound to think very carefully before it accepts this proposition, however self-evident it may seem to the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff, who, as usual, are busily planning to fight the last war over again. Apart from some small reactionary groups, the peoples of the Middle East obviously regard our proffered assistance as something dangerous to their security which may actually increase the risk of war; indeed, it was evidently fear of entanglements in Anglo-Russian conflict over issues not directly involving Egyptian national interests, such as Iran and Turkey, which caused the latest breakdown in the Cairo treaty negotiations. Furthermore, our own people will be deeply uneasy if they learn that a Labour Government is prepared to risk national bankruptcy for the sake of a doubtful military investment. It would be a pity to make guns instead of butter merely in order to defend a strategic anachronism.

The choice before us is not between intransigeant opposition to Russian claims and "appeasement." The wise course for Mr. Bevin is not to fasten on the Dardanelles as an isolated issue—in which case the discussions will lead, like those over Trieste, to an unconstructive wrangle—but to attempt a general settlement with the Russians over the whole Middle East.

Last Minute in China

Only a miracle at the last moment can now prevent large-scale civil war in China. No one doubts the sincerity of General Marshall and Dr. Leighton Stuart in their efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement. But the analogy with Spain is all too clear: the world recognised too late that Spain was a rehearsal for the second world war; and American Mustangs, Lightning and Thunderbolt fighters and bomb-laden Mitchells are performing the role in China that Heinkels and Dorniers played in Spain. Negotiations cannot succeed while military and financial aid are provided for the Kuomintang, now dominated by the Fascist-minded "C.C." clique. This section advocates full-scale war against the Communists in spite of possible international complications. A second section of the Kuomintang opposes full-scale civil war, fearing that the result will be international intervention, and for this reason favour a "dragon" policy of half-hearted political discussion and localised fighting where Kuomintang troops are strongest. Many honest people in the Kuomintang leadership who might provide a good government, which would win the support of the people, and form a coalition with the Communists and other progressive groups, have so far proved too few, and too little organised, to defeat the "old gang" which feels safe in reliance on the United States' financial and military support. And the progressive movement in America has so far failed to mobilise sufficient opinion to prevent further military and financial aid, although there are now increasing signs of disquiet against the policy of intervention. It is against this background that we must read the call of the Chinese Communist Party for all-out war against the Chinese Government and its appeal to all Chinese living in "liberated" areas to mobilise to "shatter Chiang Kai-shek's offensive."

The Calcutta Riots

Some of the difficulties that await Pandit Nehru when his government is formed can be measured by the riots that turned Calcutta into a battlefield for three days. Elsewhere Mr. Jinnah's demonstrations in favour of direct action passed off peacefully, but Calcutta is in two respects peculiar. Its Muslims are largely impoverished proletarians, while the provincial administration, including the police, is under a Muslim League Ministry, headed by Mr. Suhrawardy, a clever but reckless and irresponsible figure. After threatening to declare the independence of Bengal, he made "direct action day" a public holiday. It is clear that the Muslim rioters, who had lorries at their disposal and were armed with knives, were organised, and invaded the Hindu quarters of the city in obedience to a plan. In spite of the fact that Mr. Jinnah himself and some of the local Muslim leaders did eventually call for peace, it is reasonable to fix the major responsibility on the League and its Ministers. What political measures will have to be taken to avert anarchy and bloodshed in the future is the first question that will face the new Indian Government when it assumes office. Mr. Jinnah's refusal to accept the five seats Nehru offered him during their talk in Bombay disposes of any hope that the League will co-operate with Congress during the first crucial stage in the shaping of Independence. On the other hand, everything possible is being done to give the Interim Government the status of a Dominion Cabinet, though in law it will still be the Viceroy's Council. Nehru is acting as a premier called upon to form it. Its composition will follow the proportions previously proposed for a team of fourteen, though one of the Congressmen will probably be a Muslim.

Law and Order in Palestine

Field-Marshal Montgomery has assured the Cabinet that the situation in Palestine is now in hand. We are employing five divisions of troops, 15,000 armed policemen, the Arab Trans-Jordan Frontier Force and large units of the R.A.F. and the Navy, in order to break a few thousand terrorists and to hold down 600,000 Jewish citizens of Palestine. The barbed wire which now surrounds the administrative section of Jerusalem is a true symbol of our authority in the National Home. In the light of the Field-Marshal's report, it is worth recalling Mr. Bevin's statement at Bournemouth that he could not permit the entry of the hundred thousand refugees because this would require one extra British division. Meanwhile, President Truman's watery statement has confirmed our fears that he would find an excuse for remaining safe on the side line. It had been hoped to the last that American financial aid for the Arabs and assistance in the removal and settlement of the refugees would be forthcoming. But in view of the fury in America caused by General Barker's order—since rescinded but without publicity—and by our handling of illegal immigration, the President did not dare even to give this limited support to the Mandatory Power. Apparently Mr. Bevin believed that the President could be induced to back a policy which even the most moderate Zionists inside and outside Palestine would oppose. It has taken a year to convince him of his mistake. Last August partition could have been carried out with half the British forces at present in Palestine. Now it seems certain, that, even if the federal plan is accepted by the Arab League and put into effect, it would have to be enforced for an indefinite period against the wishes of both the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine; and would carry with it all the most odious features of the present police state.

Austria's Case

The Peace Conference having decided, against the opposition of the Russian bloc, that Austria's voice should be heard in Paris, Herr Grüber, the Austrian Foreign Minister, is likely to use the opportunity, either on the rostrum, or by private negotiations, to plead Austria's case generally for more favourable treatment. He can have few illusions about the chance of persuading the Big Four to revise their decision in the matter of the South Tyrol; his main concern will doubtless be to urge that, if reconstruction in Austria is to make any solid progress, the Government in Vienna must have immediate relief from the great burden of Allied armies of occupation and must be allowed to enjoy much more real control over Austria's economy and foreign trade. As matters stand, the immediate danger with which Austria is faced is that of an increasingly sharp cleavage between the Russian and Anglo-American Zones. The latest Russian move has been to stop export to the Western Zones of the products of the Zisterdorf oilfields, which they have sequestrated as ex-German property on the strength of the Potsdam agreement, but which the Austrian Government claims as state property under the new Nationalisation Act. The "tough" Anglo-American line adopted in relation to Russian claims in Austria has not, so far, led to any "retreat" by the U.S.S.R. in this debatable area.

Venezia Giulia

The stiff 48-hours American "ultimatum," demanding redress for the wild shooting down of U.S. planes, follows hard on British Notes of protest to Jugoslavia complaining of hostile Belgrade propaganda about "incidents." Unhappily, the exchange of incivilities into which this type of political warfare tends to degenerate does little to elucidate the facts. Frontier patrols always fire at each other in self-defence; the rival versions of what was done by rival airmen will obtain different degrees of credence on either side of the Morgan Line. Even more debatable are the Yugoslav charges, against which the Foreign Office vigorously protests, that Allied Military Government has connived at Fascist attacks on Slovenes in Zone A. Reports which reach us from correspondents in Trieste suggest that A.M.G. leaned towards the side of the Italian employers during the recent strikes and lockouts in the Trieste and Monfalcone shipyards; that the civil (as opposed to the military) police were at any rate slow to intervene effectively in recent acts of violence against officials and premises of the anti-Fascist Union and the Union of Littoral Partisans; and that there have been instances in which Slovene schools have been closed and Slovene teachers dismissed. In judging the attitude of A.M.G., it has to be borne in mind that they took over at the end of a period in which Slovene reprisals on Italians in the area had been carried out with great brutality. We believe that A.M.G. has endeavoured to be impartial and just in its administration. If it has failed it is because the real clash in Trieste is not so much between Slovenes and Italians as between a Communist-inspired working-class movement uniting Slovenes with many Italian workers, and an Italian upper and middle crust of employers, bankers, merchants and shop-keepers, who are terrified of the Partisans and who naturally look for sympathy and protection from A.M.G.

Steel Ambiguities

Mr. Wilmot's brief statement on the future of the steel industry poses more questions than it answers. The new Control Board, under the Minister of Supply, is to supervise the reconstruction of the industry and to exercise "such control as may be necessary" over production and prices. It will be no part of the functions of the Board to advise the Government in connection with plans for public ownership. It is common ground that the industry is in urgent need of modernisation and development; but is it now the intention that reconstruction is to be financed exclusively by private capital? Will the Board be much more than the Iron and Steel Federation writ large? And, if so, is there much hope of the conversion of the steel interests to a policy of maximum production and cheap prices? Above all, how is the public to interpret the "satisfaction" which the steel magnates now express at the Minister's proposals? According to the *Daily Herald*, the promised Bill for public ownership will now go forward and "the relevant sections of the industry" will be nationalised during the life of this Parliament. Is it to be supposed that the steel employers have now agreed to proceed with large-scale capital investments without an assurance that they have been reprieved at least until after 1950?

The Arithmetic of Bread

Mr. Strachey has confounded the Tory supporters of the recalcitrant bakers, who rashly asserted in advance that bread rationing was unnecessary because it would lead to no saving in consumption. The 33 per cent. reduction which he claims, in the quantity of flour released from mills during the first three weeks of rationing may somewhat exaggerate the true cut in current consumption. Mr. Strachey admits that, in the three weeks immediately preceding rationing 27,000 tons of flour were withdrawn from the mills in excess of the weekly average for 1946. But, even if this figure be set against the 109,00 tons drawn below the average in the following three weeks, and even if the (somewhat questionable) assumption be made that both house-wive and bakers let their stocks run down during the

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initial phase of rationing until "they saw where they were," the fact remains that the economy in consumption of flour is impressive, and may be as high as 20 per cent. There has been, of course, a counter-balancing increase in the demand for "points" goods through the interchangeability of coupons; but this was presumably the Food Minister's deliberate intention in framing his scheme. What is important is not merely that there has evidently been an effective check applied both to wastage of bread in catering establishments and to its use (which must clearly have been on a big scale) as poultry feed, but that the public has been made bread-conscious. No one has gone short of bread, but extravagance and carelessness in its use have been minimised. The Food Minister has scored.

The Farm Truce

The Minister of Agriculture has rightly taken a conciliatory line with the angry farmers; and the truce which was arranged last week-end should lead up to a real recognition of the causes of their anger. The farm industry, with its large number of small farmers employing little or no hired labour, and its large use of the labour of members of the farmer's family, stands in a different position from other industries in respect of costs. The farmer's labour and that of his family, at any rate on small farms, are real costs of production fully as much as the wages paid to hired labour; and accordingly it is a wrong method of compensation to begin by comparing the amount of the increase in the wages bill proper. We are not saying that the farmer has a right to receive in higher prices the full amount of any increase in wage costs—including an impartial increase for his own and his family's labour. But it is manifestly unfair to make the farmer who does employ hired labour feel that he has been promised compensation for the higher wages and is not to get it because the sum promised him has to be shared out with others who do not employ wage-workers. Mr. Williams's proposal to broaden the basis of the price-review, and to take the question of the non-wage labour into account should go a long way towards meeting the farmers' case.

Direct Action and Democracy

There are points of close resemblance between the "squatters" who are invading empty W.D. camps and the "unofficial" strikers, of whose activities the dislocation of London's gas and Co-op. milk distribution are a typical illustration. Both are acting in defiance of "the rules"—with no great regard, in the strikers' case, for the public convenience; and both are protesting against inaction or procrastination of which "They" have been allegedly guilty. To the squatters "They" are the Government; in the strikers' eyes "They" are union headquarters. The strikers complain that the recognised machinery for dealing with wage claims works with intolerable slowness, and that their official leaders — immersed in administration, and forgetful of long-past personal experience of manual work — are out of contact, and have lost sympathy with rank-and-file grievances. The whole mechanism has to be given a jolt. The same argument is employed by the squatters—and with even more force. The official instructions now issued, that camps are to have improved sanitation installed, and that their tenancy is to be legalised by payment of rent, are tantamount, they say, to an admission that accommodation could have been made available months ago. Officialdom had to be "sparked" by direct action. The moral? It is not that unofficial strikers and squatters alike should be dismissed as rebel outlaws who forfeit by their methods of action the right to have their case fairly considered. It is, on the one hand, that the machinery of industrial organisation and conciliation requires a drastic overhaul; and, on the other, that the Cabinet must continually be on guard lest Departmental slow-motion (aggravated in the case of the camps by the absence of a single Housing Ministry) creates a situation against which people revolt.

A WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

If Sir John Orr's proposal for a World Food Board prevails at the Copenhagen Conference next month, the Food and Agriculture Organisation will be the first of the United Nations organisations, born of high hopes and pious aspirations, to acquire "teeth." It will be The Second Chance, an opportunity to escape from the political slough and the desperate cynicism into which the world has relapsed. And it is worth while reminding ourselves that Hot Springs, to which Sir John is trying to give practical effect, was the first wartime conference to deal with post-war problems, the first attempt to convert unity in war into unity for peace; and that its sponsors, notably Franklin D. Roosevelt, recognised that the solid basis of post-war reconstruction could be found in satisfying the first of the four freedoms. Freedom from want means primarily food, and that implies the improvement of world agriculture, which is still mankind's chief industry.

The charter of F.A.O., drawn at Quebec last October, gave the Organisation no effective powers; it was to be a fact-finding and advisory body, deferring to national sovereignty; it was debarred from dealing with the post-war emergency situation, which was to be the concern of the temporary agencies, Unrra, the Combined Food Board, and the European Emergency Economic Committee. Sir John, who more than any other individual, was the architect of F.A.O., has never disguised the fact that, in accepting the Director-Generalship, he was not prepared to accept the limitations of the charter; he insisted on the right to act and not merely to advise.

The collapse of the world food situation last winter forced the issue. The United Nations Assembly, meeting under the shadow of famine, called for investigation. The experts assembled at Washington produced the requisite appraisal. The facts were irresistible; this was no "ninety days" crisis, not just a hiatus before the 1946 harvest would redeem the situation. Food reserves had disappeared; instead of the average of nine months' supply normally carried over from one year to the next, there was nothing. This year's harvest will go directly into human consumption. Only by restricting the feeding of grain to animals, by high extraction rates, and careful husbanding of supplies can there be any guarantee that there will not be another gap next spring.

The nations accepted the measures recommended for the conservation of supplies during the next year. They agreed on the measures necessary to make next year's sowings the greatest in all history, knowing that even then the situation would not be completely redeemed. With the need to restore the carry-over, grain will have again to be limited to human consumption and the necessary building up of animal and poultry stocks. For a minimum period of three years of scarcity farmers will have to produce all they can. But it was recognised, too, that farmers would hesitate, fearing that once again, as in the inter-war years, the abundance they created would swamp the markets, knock the bottom out of prices and threaten them with ruin in 1949. The meeting therefore called on Sir John Orr to prepare plans for a permanent world food administration.

The scheme has been drawn up and published. The arguments it marshals are a challenge to humanity and to reason. There has never been enough food in the world. Before the war, when food was being destroyed to maintain prices, half the world population consumed less than 2,250 calories a day. A large part of the under-nourished population consisted of those who themselves produced food on the land. And the insufficient calories they got were mainly made up of cereals, with a great shortage of the animal products, fruit and vegetables, that are necessary for real health and well-being. Even in the wealthiest and biggest food producing country in the world, the United States, a third of the population was below the plimsoll line of healthy diet. In the U.S.A., butter production must be increased by 15 per cent. and fruits and vegetables by 75 per cent. In a world reasonably free from want, Great Britain would consume 25 per cent. more meat and 70 per cent. more of other animal products, fruits and vegetables. For the world at large, increases of agricultural products of the order of 100 per cent. will be needed to change hunger into health.

Obviously there should be no possibility of over-production in the foreseeable future. But it is not easy to convince farmers of that. For the peasants, who in poorly developed countries go hungry while producing food, the problem is to introduce modern methods. For the farmers of advanced countries the question is rather how to organise a continuous market at a remunerative price. As we learnt in the Twenties, a relatively small excess of supply over effective demand may be followed by a violent drop in price. On the other hand, a relatively small excess of demand over supply is followed by a great increase in prices. This is dramatically demonstrated in war when prices have to be controlled to prevent an excessive rise. Besides these cyclical movements, there are week to week and month to month oscillations. In nine out of ten years between 1928 and 1938, the price of wheat on the world market fluctuated by 70 per cent. After the last war, the average annual income on an American farm slumped in two years from $1,360 to $460.

The third factor is purchasing power. But an expanding economy, based on a prosperous agricultural industry, will stimulate demand for industrial commodities (starting with ploughs, tractors, and farm implements) and so produce that purchasing power.

The World Food Board which Sir John Orr proposes would stabilise the prices of agricultural commodities in the world markets, establish a world food reserve adequate for any emergency, due to crop failure in any part of the world, provide funds to finance the disposal of surplus agricultural products on special terms to countries which urgently need them and, finally, would co-operate with organisations concerned with international credits for industrial and agricultural development, and with trade policy.

For purpose of price stabilisation, the Board would determine what world prices would ensure the quantities which could be currently marketed. It would announce the minimum and maximum prices and would undertake to buy when the world price fell below the declared minimum, and sell from its stocks when the world price exceeded the maximum. The "safety reserves" held by the Board would vary from 6 to 12 months stocks, according to the Commodity.

This part of the operation would pay its way. But circumstances might arise in which production would be in excess of the regulated demand. This is what we call a "glut"—in plain terms a situation in which millions go hungry while the "surplus" food is burnt. Under the new proposals, the Board would acquire this surplus and, instead of destroying it, would see that it reached the people who needed it, even if they could not pay an economic price for it. This is scarcely banking practice, but Sir John Orr calls it commonsense economics to raise productive power.

Another of the Board's tasks would be to supply (or arrange through the International Bank), long-term credits to assist schemes of agriculture development. An expert staff must approve and advise on such schemes. (F.A.O. has already got a mission in Greece to help that country with a 25-year programme of agricultural expansion.) Under-developed countries need not only ploughs, tractors, fertilisers and so forth, but scientific aid in agriculture, pest-control, animal husbandry, soil-conservation and projects like T.V.A.

These are the aims which Sir John Orr is asking the Conference to endorse—and quickly. The end of 1946 is the latest minute. For with the International Emergency Food Council due to expire at the end of 1947, and the rapid extinction of other relief agencies, F.A.O. is left residuary legatee or Official Receiver. As things stand, it will be left with unfinished business, a world crisis and no powers to deal with it.

Of course there is opposition. Some see danger to the still embryonic International Trade Organisation. That depends on whether trade is regarded as an end in itself or a means to an end, and whether that end is the well-being of the people. Some regard it as an invasion of sovereignty, to which Sir John retorts that Governments were ready enough to cede sovereignty to those who *restricted* rubber and copper and tin. Some say it is revolutionary and yet, as the Report reminds the Conference, all these devices have been tried successfully on a national scale.

The attitude of Britain may well be decisive at Copenhagen. This is something bigger than BU's. It is also bigger than the imagination of most of the Whitehall officials. Fortunately in Strachey we have a leader of a delegation who has the imagination, the grasp and the conviction and, we presume, the backing of the Cabinet. It should be the privilege of Britain to champion the first and only positive project of the United Nations.

THE UNPLANNED SOCIETY

(*By Our American Correspondent*)

It is just a year since President Truman, with the advice of Mr. Snyder, Director of Reconversion, removed virtually all controls and rationing from the American economy, leaving only a precarious check on prices in the Office of Price Administration. The Unplanned Society was launched on its way. Most of us, watching American industry beginning to career downhill like a Sherman tank with all its control mechanism shot away, shook our heads as we tried to scurry our baby Austin into a protective ditch and waited for the inevitable crash.

Yet, after a year, though the world is somewhat dented, American industry—returned to pre-New Deal planlessness—cannot be written off as a failure in the vital problems of reconversion. Production of peacetime goods is already more than 170 per cent. of the 1935-9 level. It is true that automobiles, refrigerators and some other durable goods as well as clothing are slow in appearing on the market, but it is a more typical sign of the times that new wireless sets are being remaindered at cut prices. Widespread unemployment, which was freely predicted even by the Administration, has not materialised, and there is still a very tight labour market in many parts of the country. Company profits are even higher than during the war and, perhaps as a reward to business men for having so well served their country, a grateful Congress has now virtually annihilated price control, so that profits may be even larger.

The "Economic Man" has been well served by the Unplanned Society, but the Economic Man is such a small part of American society. The Little Man, the Union Man and the Housewife have all felt severely injured by the workings of the business machine. The production operation was a success, but the patient almost died. In human terms the experiment has been a horrible failure.

The outward sign of this failure in human relations was the epidemic of strikes that afflicted America. Though organised Labour almost doubled its numbers in the United States during the war, it did not, as in Britain, increase its recognised powers *vis-à-vis* management. That struggle was kept in careful refrigeration throughout the war and re-emerged immediately after VJ-Day when President Truman announced that free collective bargaining would replace Government control of wages. The issue on which the trial of strength between Labour and Management took place was clear. The end of the war meant the virtual end of overtime work, which paid a 50 per cent. bonus; this, in turn, meant a drastic reduction in total weekly wages. American Labour struck to assert the simple principle that a lower living standard should not be the first fruits of peace for the working man.

In deference to the shibboleths of the Unplanned Society each major labour dispute had to be fought to the bitter end with the maximum ill-will on both sides. Millions of man-days were lost, billions of dollars thrown away, the breach between Management and Labour was dangerously widened, the alliance between President and Labour on which the New Deal had been founded was broken, before reasonably just wage settlements were concluded. Mr. Truman, through his own ineptitude and the bad advice of the gang of Missouri politicos who surround him, convinced both Labour and Management that he was a false friend addicted to interfering too much and too late.

Labour is far from content with what it has gained by the strikes. Even in the matter of wages it is still true that the working man is taking home less per week than during the war, while companies are making larger profits. Political grievances are even more numerous and urgent. It is difficult to exaggerate how bad the record of the recent Congress has been on all matters of special interest to Labour. In spite of the vigorous protests of the Unions, the Office of Price Administration was rendered powerless; in spite of warnings from Labour and from the Executive, the Case Bill, which would have crippled every Union, was passed by large majorities in both Houses, and nearly passed over the Presidental veto. The Full Employment Bill, Social Security Bill, Public Health Bill, all supported by the solid phalanx of Labour, were all amended to death or shelved by the 79th Congress.

Labour leaders now recognise in the light of this record that the post-war Congress is dominated by Business. And Business has become Bigger as a result of the war; more power is concentrated in fewer companies. This process is continuing after the war as Government-owned plants are put up for sale on conditions which only vast concerns can meet. For example, the largest steel plant ever built west of the Rockies has just been sold to U.S. Steel—the largest steel firm in the country. To compete with such power the Unions, which have also increased in size during the war, are attempting to organise their strength for political influence in Congress and not merely for collective bargaining.

The Political Action Committee of the CIO is still, even after the death of its leader Sidney Hillman, the most powerful political instrument in the hands of Labour. Its effectiveness in the 1944 election was based on its ability to deliver the massive Labour vote and thus ensure a heavy poll, which is usually in America a progressive poll. But Mr. Truman, by his double dealing over the Railway strike, has sacrificed for ever the enthusiasm of Labour, made impossible the mass turnouts which elected F.D.R., and thus blunted the cutting edge of Labour's political action.

Today Labour, which for ten years enjoyed the privilege of sitting if not in the driver's seat, at least next to the driver, finds itself out on the roadside begging a lift. It has the choice between another car going fast in the wrong direction, or a donkey cart ambling in no particular direction which might be persuaded to go roughly where Labour wanted, or thirdly of walking slowly but directly on its own feet to its own goal. In the circumstances, organised Labour will almost certainly stay reluctantly with the Democratic donkey-cart. Bad as is Truman and much of the Democratic party, no sane Labour leader will remove Truman to make Taft president—or Dewey or Bricker. A Third Party would involve too long a political exile for a group which has tasted so much power.

For the moment, therefore, Labour, led by the PAC, continues its long-term programme;

(i) To eliminate reactionary candidates in Democratic primary elections so that voters will not be faced with the choice between Tweedledum (Dem.) and Tweedledee (Rep.) in general elections.

(ii) To organise the South and ensure heavy polls there so that politically pernicious characters, such as Senator Bilbo and Representative Rankin, can be thrown out of the rotten boroughs where 10 per cent. of the electorate return them.

(iii) To make Labour as powerful a lobby in Congress as the National Association of Manufacturers or the Farm Bloc.

(iv) To ensure that, if Mr. Truman does not choose to run in 1948, Labour will be able to force a candidate on the Democratic party for whom they could feel enthusiastic.

Temporarily Labour is in its weakest position since 1932, and its dominant feeling is one of resentment at being the guinea-pig of the great experiment in planlessness. This experience is hastening Labour's slow movement away from modified private enterprise toward the goals of State planning and Socialism.

By a curious paradox it is easier to predict what lies ahead for the Unplanned Society than for the Planned. Nature will take its course. Today the world realises with trepidation that the Sherman tank has by no means ended its Gadarene run. With price controls virtually removed, it is full speed ahead, for whatever lies ahead. Inevitably there will be some measure of inflation in the United States; indeed, within the past month commodity prices have risen about 15 per cent. Purchasing power is 2.5 times greater than in 1939, while production is only 1.7 times as great.

The result of inflation, however mild, will be unpleasant at home and abroad. At home it may touch off the second round of strikes to keep wages up with prices. It will certainly pinch severely that half of the population who hold only 3 per cent. of the total war savings; and it will soon mop up the savings of a further 35 per cent. who hold savings of less than $2,000. Abroad, though inflation in the long run would reduce the impact of tariffs and so make exports to America easier, in the short run it only increases the dollar stringency in a world which needs to buy from America.

None the less, inflation is not in itself the great danger to American economy. Her production potential is quite sufficient to stop prices rising indefinitely, except in the tragic event of production being virtually halted by strikes. The real danger lying ahead of America is that, when savings have been mopped up and factories are working full blast, there will no longer be sufficient purchasing power to absorb the national product, and the United States will enter a deflationary spiral. In that case America will be the greatest possible menace to world economic peace. The ideals of free trade, to which the Administration is welded, and in pursuance of which the British Loan was pushed through Congress, would disappear in a cloud of nationalistic hot air. A trade war to the knife would ensue as America tried to export her unemployment to the rest of the world.

This is not just a bad dream; it is a probability unless America wakes up and takes action. It is not too late to hope. *If* the pressure of inflation is felt sufficiently sharply by that half of the population without savings, and *if* they make their voice heard in Washington before Congress reassembles they can force the President to use the powers he still possesses. Prices could be curbed, and the disparity between wages and profits which has been growing could be lessened so that purchasing power may match production. This is a strong programme, and Harry Truman is a weak President; but, if the American people see the light in time, they still have the power to save themselves and the rest of the world from the ravages of the Unplanned Society.

A LONDON DIARY

"It makes one feel older," said a friend on the day H. G. died. "I keep contrasting the great men of the time when you and I were boys with the writers to whom my son must go for inspiration. G. B. S., Masefield, Gilbert Murray, Maugham and Belloc still survive, but as voices they belong to the past, while Conrad and Hardy, Bennett, Chesterton, George Moore and a dozen others, who kept us on our intellectual toes, are long since dead. Wells makes a great gap. We have no comparable galaxy of stars in our intellectual firmament." The reasons? I could list a number, but first I should place the end of that tradition of self-confidence and belief in progress which was the real religion of the Victorian and even of the Edwardian epoch. It died, I think, in the trenches and in the mud of Passchendaele. Partly it was just the slaughter of young manhood from which we never recovered. In artistic expression the turning point was the *Waste Land*. Since then our writers—and we have had and still have some fine writers—have been trying to work through a maze of emotional conflicts, not drawing, like their predecessors, on an exuberant and expanding tradition. The Marxists have got this part right. Many who might have been creative writers have perforce become politicians and soldiers. Soviet Russia, which looked for a time like being the inspiration of the inter-war generation, as the French Revolution was of the romantic revival, has disappointed writers who looked to her because her ideology has dwindled into tactics, and because, however great the merits of her cultural achievements at home, she is obviously not interested in the complex strivings of a decadent *bourgoisie*.

* * *

Priestley is in many ways an exception. He is welcomed in the U.S.S.R., though he is critical of much within the Soviet Union. And he is almost alone in this country in recognising the reasons for disillusion and pessimism, and yet maintaining his robust outlook and, above all, his high spirits. It is because he shares this quality of vitality and gusto with the pre-world-war generations that I thought he was the best possible person to pay our tribute to H. G. Wells at the crematorium cemetery last week. He said, I thought, exactly what was wanted, and his thought and phrases were in themselves memorable. The small chapel was full, but the occasion was private and confined to relatives and personal friends. Many well-known English writers and literary folk were there, but no politicians—unless you put Lord Beaverbrook in that category. Watching his face, I wondered whether he were asking himself whether he might not have made better use of the period when H. G. tried to persuade him and other men of great affairs to turn their minds from money-making and the pursuit of personal power to the use of their talents and influence for the purposes of world statesmanship. As usual, H. G. told the story in novel form. The *Autocracy of Mr. Parham* did not win the attention it deserved.

* * *

I wish H. G. had received better social recognition during his lifetime. He would have dearly liked to be an F.R.S. Though he was a prophet rather than an inventor and a teacher rather than a scientist—he describes very frankly in his *Autobiography* how he failed to stay his scientific course—he did more than any other man to explain the relation of science to social affairs, to turn scientists into responsible people and to give to men of affairs the ideal of a disinterested and scientific approach. He was on close terms with most of the great British scientists of his day. The other honour that H. G. would, I'm sure, have appreciated was the O.M. He seems to me and to many others naturally to belong to that distinguished company. The idea was suggested in the right quarter more than once, but without success. I hazard the guess that his politics were the barrier. It is surely fantastic that G. B. S. even now is not an O.M. In the case of Wells the obstacle, I believe, was his Republicanism. His abuse of monarchy was sometimes almost scurrilous, and he did not spare British monarchy. One of the last of his writings (Dec. 23, 1944) was a letter to this journal putting on record his detestation of the whole institution. Although he was already seriously ill, he asked me to call and see him so that he could personally give me the letter for publication—he knew most papers would refuse it—and he made a humorous show of reluctance in cutting out some phrases that were obviously and unnecessarily offensive. I believe he knew they would damage the effect of the letter, and that he only put them in so that he should have something to bargain about and so preserve the substance of his letter intact.

* * *

Stalin grants very few interviews. A few enterprising foreign journalists have pushed into the Kremlin; there was the famous occasion on which Stalin interviewed Bernard Shaw and Lord Lothian and the Astors all at one go. But for foreign visitors to see Stalin at all is a rare event and the Labour delegation were in luck to have his attention for two and a half hours. I gather that, like almost everyone who has personal contact with the Generalissimo, they were most happily impressed with his quick perception, his humour and his wide and informed grasp of world problems. No doubt they will tell the story for themselves in their own way. Harold Laski, whom I have seen since his return, came away convinced that, with patience and generosity of outlook, there is no problem between Britain and Russia that is insoluble, though the road may be long and difficult. Stalin has always taken the view that the Russian way to Socialism is the hard way, imposed on Russia by her own conditions, and that western countries with a different tradition have to find their own way to the common goal. I was glad to learn that Laski gives an excellent report of the British Embassy in Moscow, where Lord Inverchapel was personally popular as well as respected for his shrewdness and ability. On the other hand, the Labour delegation found the British Embassy at Warsaw stuff-shirted, unhelpful and lacking in all the qualities needed for success in a revolutionary State. It is strange that Mr. Bevin, who has received so many reports of this notorious and dangerous centre of infection should be so hesitant about creating in Poland an Embassy that represents present-day Britain.

* * *

What will the Welsh Labour M.P.s do now the Government has finally refused to appoint a Secretary for Wales? Mr. Attlee has certainly made things awkward for them by publishing his letter at a time when they would be going back to meet their constituents and when the National Eisteddfod and other meetings would be giving hundreds of Welshmen an opportunity to meet and talk over their grievance. The Welsh M.P.s of all parties, I see, have already met at Cardiff. So far, they have only talked of Mr. Attlee "repudiating the claims of Wales as a nation," but Welsh nationalist opinion may expect them to do more than register discontent. The problem for the M.P.s is that all parties, except the Tories, are committed to the eventual creation of a Welsh Parliament, and that M.P.s of all parties agreed that Wales needs a Welsh Secretary to supervise post-war policy. The Labour M.P.s in particular may have some difficulty in explaining why their election pledges have been repudiated. In 1945, *Llais Llafur*, the official organ of the Labour Party, made five major promises: a Secretary of State, a Welsh Broadcasting Corporation, an end to the forced transference of labour from Wales to England, a new North-South Wales road, and a central economic body with adequate powers to control and develop the country's economy. All five have now been turned down in Westminster. Naturally, this all plays into the hands of the organised Nationalists. It is not enough for the Government to say that the presence of Welshmen in the Cabinet is a guarantee that Welsh problems are not forgotten.

* * *

An official statement about starvation in Hamburg and continuous reports of the growth of bitterness against the Occupying Powers give a peculiar point to the publication this week of the Report of the National Council of Labour Delegation to Germany. One of the crying necessities is for trade union organisation, and for that the Control Commission needs an expert in authority at the top level. The other ludicrous thing is that so few Germans are allowed to see British newspapers. The *News Chronicle* rightly points out that there is no technical difficulty in flying 5,000 copies of each of the chief British newspapers every day to Germany, and that this suggestion was put up nine months ago.

* * *

Harold Nicolson's broadcasts from Paris are triumphs of art that conceals art. To hear him hesitate and fish for a word that you know, if you know anything of broadcasting, is really written down in front of him, to note the inflections of his voice and his carefully prepared impromptus and conversational asides—all this is a lesson to any would-be broadcaster. His talks are also of the great service to the public, which, if it were not for Harold Nicolson, would long ago have wearied of even trying to know what the Conference is about. His last Sunday's broadcast earned my particular gratitude. He exposed the confusion between open diplomacy, in the sense of keeping the public informed about its objectives and results, and the present idiocy of substituting for diplomacy a series of election speeches directed to the American, Russian and British publics. He also protested in the most persuasive way about a matter which has been irritating me daily for the last seven years. It is the abuse of the perfectly good word "appeasement." The word acquired its pejorative meaning because it was used to defend a policy of purchasing a precarious breathing space for yourself by breaking your word and, at the expense of others, surrendering both in word and deed a vital principle which you could have maintained. Now it is used to discredit all rational efforts at peace-making. Anyone who wants to behave decently towards their neighbours or to settle differences with Germans or Russians, with Arabs or Jews, with Indians or Egyptians, or indeed to behave in a neighbourly, sensible manner, at home or abroad, towards anyone with whom they have a dispute, can apparently be blackmailed by being accused of appeasement.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Clare Campbell.

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A Brighton salesman said: "Every time I think of church I lose if I am gambling."—Interview in *News Chronicle.*

Leslie St. Clair, in his latest sensational illusion—"The Belsen Horror" (He will burn a woman alive!)—Advert. *Belfast News.*

"Quite a number of young officers who have been demobilised want to wear bowler hats to show that they were young officers.

"It may well be that the bowler hat is getting to the top of the tree," said Mr. R. Weatherall, a master of Eton College.—*Evening Standard.*

Mr. and Mrs. Attlee, arriving at midday, were at first refused admission to the ground, and when they did get in they were twice introduced as "the Prime Minister and Mrs. Churchill."—*Daily Mail.*

Broadly speaking, British industry is owned by the people of Britain.—*The People.*

WILL SOUTH AFRICA GO FASCIST?

[The author of this article is General-Secretary of the South African Garment Workers' Union, a member of the National Executive Committee of the S.A. Trades and Labour Council and S.A. Workers' delegate to the forthcoming conference of the I.L.O.]

DEMOCRACY in South Africa has always been of a very superficial character. Eight million non-Europeans—four-fifths of the population—have never been allowed to enjoy any democratic rights. With the advent of Nazism in Europe, even what little democracy did exist was gravely endangered, and in the not-distant future it is highly probable that South Africa will have an openly Fascist Government masquerading under the title of a "Christian National State." Fascism by any other name smells just as sour. The Union may have a Volksleier instead of a Führer or Caudillo, but government by the sjambok is just as unpleasant as government by the rubber truncheon.

Theoretically, South Africa is just one more British Dominion; but socially, economically and politically it differs fundamentally from the other members of the Commonwealth. Its entire national life is pervaded with a spirit of racial intolerance and hatred. There is widespread hatred between the English and the Afrikaners; both are hostile to the Jews; the three together are opposed to the Indians; and all four are imbued with hatred and prejudice against the Negroes. Of course there are honourable exceptions among all sections, who realise the baseness of racial hatred and the incalculable harm it must do to South African national life, prestige and future progress. But there is hardly a person in South Africa who does not hate someone of a different race.

No other English-speaking country has suffered so much from Nazi propaganda as South Africa. The first man in South Africa to introduce openly Nazi doctrines was Mr. Oswald Pirow, who at different times was entrusted with the portfolios of Justice, Railways, and Defence. From 1933 onwards, the German Nazis carried on feverish activities in South Africa, doing all in their power to win the Afrikaner people over to their cause. The Nationalist Party of Dr. Malan came out openly in support of Nazism. In Parliament, in their very powerful Afrikaans Press, and from numerous platforms, leading members of the Nationalist Party exalted the virtues of Hitler and Mussolini, and sang hymns of praise to Franco. Moreover, apart from the Nationalist Party, which is the official Opposition in South Africa, a large number of Fascist or semi-Fascist organisations sprang up, such as Greyshirts, financed by the German Foreign Office, Blackshirts, and, more recently, the "Ossewa Brandwag" (Ox Waggon Sentinel) under the leadership of Dr. Van Rensburg. In addition, numerous Afrikaans cultural societies became Nazi propaganda agencies. The Universities and Colleges of Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, and other centres became hotbeds of Nazi ideology. The Dutch Reformed Churches, by far the most powerful religious institutions in South Africa, and always under the tutelage of the Nationalist Party, came out openly in support of Hitler. In the Councils of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Churches the doctrines of *Mein Kampf* have replaced those of the Bible. For over a decade the combined forces of reaction in South Africa conducted a virulent campaign in which the Dutch Reformed Churches played a leading role, against the Trades Union movement.

The Nationalist Party and the other Fascist and pro-Fascist organisations unfortunately enjoy widespread support among the mass of Afrikaner people. Tens of thousands of Afrikaner miners, railwaymen, transport workers, and poor whites on the land are fanatical supporters of the Party, or of some Fascist group. When war was declared in September, 1939, the late General Hertzog, then the Prime Minister of South Africa, came out determinedly in support of Germany. The decision of the Union Parliament to fight on the side of Britain was carried only by a comparatively small majority; and in the General Election for the Union Parliament in 1943 the Nationalist Party scored over 350,000 votes and returned nearly 50 Members of Parliament.

Whatever political division there may exist among the members of the Nationalist Party, its leaders are uniformly and determinedly opposed to democracy, and spurn any suggestion of liberalism. On the other hand, many leaders of the United Party of General Smuts are in full sympathy with the pernicious philosophy of the Nationalist Party. Quite recently, even a leading M.P. of the Labour Party went over to the Nationalists. It is significant, too, that many Government Departments are substantially under the control of the Fascist elements. The tragic history of the Weimar Republic seems to be repeating itself in South Africa. The pro-Fascist elements enjoy almost unlimited financial support. They always display supreme arrogance, and their behaviour as the "rulers of tomorrow" inspires confidence among their followers. They exploit the national and religious sentiments of the Afrikaner people to the full, and hold themselves up as the "saviours of white civilisation." Indeed, the only visible difference between *Dig Transvaaler*, organ of the Nationalist Party, and the one time *Angriff* is that the former is printed in Afrikaans.

The democratic forces, on the other hand, are weak and isolated. Superficially the United Party opposes the Fascist elements and stand for democracy. General Smuts, the leader of the Party, always makes liberal speeches when he is abroad, and on several occasions has even made such speeches in South Africa, but in actual practice the policy of the United Party is not determined by the lofty principles of the Atlantic Charter but by the more mundane considerations of cheap labour for the mining industry and for the farmers. On that issue, and on the need to keep the non-European in his place, there is no fundamental difference between the United Party and the Nationalist Party; whatever difference there appears to be is one of method and form, but not of substance. There is a so-called Liberal wing in the United Party representing the interests of the rising manufacturing classes. Its adherents realise that the future of South Africa depends on industrial development, and that there can be no extensive development of industry so long as four-fifths of the population are kept in ignorance, extreme poverty, and backwardness. But this wing of the Party does not enjoy any real mass support; and the Labour movement in South Africa is extremely weak. The South African Labour Party has only nine members of Parliament, and even most of these secured their election only as the result of a pact with the United Party in the 1943 General Election.

During the war there was a cleavage between the United Party and the Nationalist Party, but now that the war is over there is no fundamental division between the two. The Republican question is still kept alive by the Nationalist Party, but only as a means of catching votes, and not as a real political issue. Well-informed political quarters hint at the fusion of the two parties in the not distant future; and, should this come about, the well-organised, more politically astute Nationalist Party politicians will determine policy. For the masses of ordinary people who realise that a nation cannot be built on racial hatreds, the prospects are not bright; and they are grimmer still for the disenfranchised eight million Africans.

A sound economy and a healthy national life in South Africa will be possible only if the people of all races are encouraged to become highly efficient producers in their respective spheres. This means giving non-Europeans land, teaching them efficient farming methods, providing extensive educational facilities and, above all, granting them full democratic rights. People who are compelled to remain illiterate, live in terrible poverty and are subject to political oppression cannot possibly become efficient farmers or skilled artisans.

The South African Labour Party is always in a dilemma. It is frequently called upon to choose between principles of democracy and political expediency arising from the attitude of the European electorate. Invariably, expediency determines the Party's policy. During the recent debates in the Union Parliament on the reactionary Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill the Party split, and the leader, Mr. Walter Madeley, who adopted an ultra-reactionary attitude, resigned the leadership. The division in the Party was not based on true democracy *versus* racial intolerance. The more progressive Labour M.P.s only sought to introduce certain amendments to make the Bill less reactionary. The only representative in the Union Parliament who throughout adopted a real democratic line, and fought the Bill with determination, was Senator Basner, the representative of the Africans of the Northern Provinces. The real support for progress and democracy in South Africa comes from the African workers, who are beginning to build up strong trade unions in spite of difficult circumstances, and from certain sections of European trade unionists, who realise that higher standards and better conditions for European workers will be obtained by uplifting the miserably low standards of the non-Europeans. There is also an influential group in the Labour Party which advocates a more progressive policy towards non-Europeans.

British Labour and progressive opinion generally would render the South African people a lasting service by taking a more active interest in South African affairs, and exposing when necessary the misdeeds of the reactionaries. Admittedly South Africa is a self-governing Dominion, but no nation has a licence to indulge in racial oppression.

IDENTITY CARDS

NO ONE minded much about identity cards in September, 1939. The immediate outlook was so imponderable and bewildering that you felt reassured at every new display of planning and authority; the people at the top knew what they were doing. And if you felt that your identity had been almost obscured in a vast uniformity of cardboard gas-mask boxes and Anderson shelters, it was comforting to have your individuality reaffirmed by way of an official document that you could keep; its number, at least, was different from anyone else's.

Even now, most reasonable people see nothing to resent in being known to the Registrar and having a personal card reminding them that they are known. There are certainly some who yearn for their pre-war anonymity; they write letters to the Press, and even angry leading articles, demanding that we be now relieved of our identity cards as they once defended, in the name of Liberty, their right to go unvaccinated or to send their children to work at the age of ten. "We should throw identity cards on to the bonfire and announce to the world we have done so," said Sir William Darling in London recently. "We have become a docile, dumb people, a nation of subservient cattle." Many people see that a lost pocket-wallet containing an identity card is more likely to be recoverable; that people found unconscious in the street or suffering from loss of memory can by such means be the more quickly identified and restored to their friends. The bulk of the public probably give the question hardly any thought at all, and since the carrying of the card on the person is not compulsory, do not know at any given moment where their cards are to be found.

The National Registration Act does not, in terms, oblige you to carry your identity card. As extended by its supplementary Regulations, it requires you to produce your card on the demand of any police officer, or of any member of the armed forces who has reasonable grounds for thinking you are a deserter or an escaped prisoner of war. Thus, if you fail to do so you have committed an offence. But you can "cure" the offence and will not be prosecuted if you produce your card at a police station (nominated by you to suit your own convenience) within two days. In order to ascertain whether you duly fulfil this undertaking, the policeman (but not the Service man, who must find a policeman to do it) will hand you a "reminder" in the shape of a little form he makes out in pencil, and send an advice note to the police station you have nominated. Both of these must bear your name and address, and he will accordingly ask you for them. He is also empowered to ask you to declare your sex, age, nationality, occupation, and whether you're married or single. It is a further and quite distinct offence to fail to give him any of this information; and in this case you cannot "cure" your offence by subsequently producing your card.

The police cannot arrest you for any of these things, by itself. If they think you are a deserter they will arrest you under the Army Act, and they have various powers, both statutory and Common Law, to arrest you if they suspect you of being a felon. But all this could be done before identity cards were thought of. There is no doubt that the legislators, who could so easily have embodied a police power of arrest in the National Registration Act, have deliberately refrained from doing so for obvious reasons of policy. If the police want to prosecute you for not producing your identity card or for refusing to say where you live, how old you are, what you do for a living, and so on, they will have to serve a summons on you—if they can find out where to serve. But the point is that, by refusing to answer these questions (having already failed to produce your card) you have become liable to a fine of £5 or a month's imprisonment, or both. A constable had no authority, before this identity card business, to walk up to you in the street and say "How old are you?" "What do you do for a living?" or "Are you a married woman?" But once he has asked for your identity card and found that, like most people, you've left it at home, he can demand to know any of these things and prosecute you for not answering—even if you produce your card at a police station in due course.

This may be startling enough in itself; but before you dismiss it as fantastically improbable, consider the following story.

Mr. X, coming out of a cinema with a lady, is accosted by Mr. Y, who has traced and consumed enough alcohol to make him quarrelsome. He asks Mr. X for a light. "I'm sorry," says Mr. X, "I'm a non-smoker." Mr. Y is at first sceptical, then incredulous, then thoroughly angry. He raises his voice against non-smokers and other such, and a little crowd collects. The innocent Mr. X becomes angry, too, and eventually a few blows are exchanged. A constable appears, and decides after some inquiry that Mr. Y must be arrested for being drunk and disorderly.

"Can you come to the Police Station, Mr. X?" asks the constable. Mr. X is thoroughly alarmed. He doesn't want to be mixed up in this any more. No, he'd rather not go. "Well, I'd like your name and address, please," says the policeman; "I'll have to put in a report about all this, you see." But Mr. X has good reasons, proper or at least not unlawful ones, for not wanting to give his name and address, and he diffidently declines. "Then I must see your identity card." "I'm sorry, constable, I haven't got it with me." "Well, if you haven't got it here you must produce it at a police station within two days; and I shall have to tell them you're coming, so I still want your name and address." No, Mr. X is adamant. (After all, this silly business was not started by him; why should he be compelled to disclose his identity just because Mr. Y can't hold his liquor?) From that moment, Mr. X is a criminal—he is liable to a fine of £5 and a month's imprisonment. The constable, lacking imagination but not resource, decides to take a chance and arrest him for fighting in the street; and at the police station he faces the alternative of giving his name and address or spending a night in the cells. So he gives them at long last, and is released; but he is later summoned before a Magistrate and fined ten shillings for refusing his name and address on the constable's demand.

It is not difficult to imagine other circumstances in which unoffending citizens may qualify for this penalty. You witness a street accident, you are knocked down by a cyclist, you take a lost dog to the police, you are asked for your identity card in the course of an area "round-up" for deserters or crooks—or you are merely asked by a constable who has nothing else to do and wants a little light reading. What the National Registration Act means is that you must now give your name and address to the police whenever you are asked. So long as the Act is in force there can be no *incognito.*

Its expectation of life is an official secret. It is an "emergency" enactment—by implication it so describes itself. Section 12 (4) says that "this Act shall continue in force until such date as His Majesty may by Order in Council declare to be the date on which the emergency that was the occasion of the passing of this Act came to an end." But what was "the emergency that was the occasion of the passing of this Act?" There is no definition of this in the Act, nor is there any adoption of the "period of the present emergency" defined in the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1939. The inference is that the emergency was not Hitler's war but any war, within any forseeable future against which statesmen must make provision. Compulsory military service was one important reason for the Act. Rationing was another. Either or both of these may come to an end—but there will be the Social Insurance Act to administer. Any kind of administration can be cursed as a bureaucracy, but usually it is preferable to chaos.

The pros and cons were fairly well represented in two recent letters in *The Times*. One of the writers went to a National Registration Office to get a card for his small daughter. "Pleasant to think that all this bothersome business will soon be unnecessary," he remarked to the official; and his indignation knew no bounds when the official told him the new card was valid until 1960. "I do not know, and have no means of finding out," he said angrily in *The Times*, "whether the statement made to me was the product of ignorant dogmatism or was based on facts. If it was true, then I think it is time the public should be informed of these facts and have the opportunity to express an opinion on them." The next day one of them did. He asked the Editor of *The Times* what objections a law-abiding citizen could make to the continuation of identity cards after the war? "To some," he said, "they seem to be one of the few wartime measures worth retaining . . . I foresee many citizens voluntarily carrying these cards, just as the foreign traveller used to provide himself with a passport when one was not required by law. In many ways they will be a safeguard to the individual as well as a valuable administrative adjunct."

But strong, heavy sticks with which to beat the Government are in great demand, and the National Registration Act is a stick with knobs on. If liberty's champions ever realise what really can be done to them by means of this Act, the stick will acquire spikes as well. One day, perhaps, an Order in Council will destroy the National Registration system and make us once more the only important country in Europe with no central index of its inhabitants and no way of tracing them as individuals; and we shall all throw our identity cards on to a ceremonial bonfire stoked by Sir William Darling. But this will not be for a long time yet.

C. H. ROLPH

MRS. ADAM

I STOOD irresolutely at the foot of a stone stairway. The walls on either side had collapsed, but three skeleton rooms still clung to the stairs, fragile but tenacious, like ivy. You felt that bit by bit everything would go and only these stone stairs remain, leading fantastically upwards into air. In those formless dun-coloured acres of ruin the stairway was the only thing to keep its coherence. It still led somewhere. It still led to the room where Mrs. Adam lived, with her dog and her grand piano.

I had heard rumours of the 82-year-old Englishwoman, living alone in the heart of this shattered German city. I pictured to myself some derelict crone clinging to her last hencoop in the wreck of things, only alive because life was a bare inch more supportable than the absolute darkness and cold. Old ladies were already beginning to die of cold; soon they would be dying of hunger. If they lived, they lived on two slices of bread a day, and a little soup. The parcel of groceries I had brought with me might put off the inescapable for Mrs. Adam till the Spring.

I knocked on the half-open door, and then stepped into the room. It was in darkness, except for a chink of light between the boards nailed over the window, but as my eyes became accustomed to the gloom I distinguished a sofa, a book-case, the shadowy bulk of a concert grand propped on a wooden box where one of its legs was missing—and then a door opened in the far corner of the room and a dog began a metallic yapping. "Who's there?" said a voice. "Be *quiet*, Patsy!" and Mrs. Adam came in. I explained who I was. "Wait a moment, dear, till we have a light."

The tiny paraffin lamp which she set on the piano left all but the halo around it in gloom. I found myself facing a small erect lady in black with a large crucifix on her breast and a morose Pomeranian in her arms. She had a strong, grim, shrewd face and amused eyes, and I was aware of her complete self-possession. She was evidently not yet clinging to any kind of hen-coop, and perhaps had been too accustomed to strange visitors to be anything more than mildly curious about one more man in khaki. She sat on the sofa and motioned me beside her. "Now, what's it all about this time?"

I explained that I had heard there was a fellow-countryman of mine in this benighted city, that we were anxious to trace and assist those people who had been trapped by the war in 1939, and if she could give me some particulars about herself we might be able to supply her with some extra food or fuel. I had brought, I said, a few things with me, and laid my parcel on the table.

She was immediately engrossed. It was like watching a small child undoing a Christmas present. Snapping the string in her strong gnarled hands and tearing away the brown paper, she muttered half to me and half to herself. "Oh, what a feast—milk too! And what's this? Raspberries in syrup, haven't seen such things not for years I haven't—what's it say on this tin? Cocoa? Real English cocoa! Oh, it does me old heart good! You must have a tune, for that, a bit of music—would you like that? What about 'Ome, Sweet 'Ome?"

I said politely that would be very nice. She settled herself down on the piano-stool and rubbed her hands together. The stale, sweet nostalgic little tune was resonant in the darkness. As the old lady played, she flung her head back and closed her eyes, swaying to and fro as if the school-room melody were as moving as a great sonata. Then suddenly she flashed an indescribably Cockney grin across to me and broke into a series of astonishingly variations. Her fingers danced and dazzled along the keyboard. Home, Sweet Home became a glittering allegro, disappeared in sudden showers of notes, rippled back and vanished again, loomed into a thunderous *marche funèbre.* "Barrel-organ!" she said, with scintillating trills up and down the key-board; and then, "'Armonium!" The tune was now witty, now melancholy, now dressed in absurd gay spangles, and then at last itself again; and as her hands lingered on the final chord and Mrs. Adam turned as if with a lifetime's instinct for applause, I clapped my hands, knowing that I was in the presence of an artist, though not yet that I was in the presence of one of the great pianists of Europe.

"Just foolin'," she said. "Do you like the Bluebells of Scotland?"

"Not a bit," I replied. "I like. . . I suppose you couldn't play me the Appassionata?"

"I might manage it. I used to know it once, but all me music was burnt. Let's see. . ." and abruptly and with complete mastery she launched into the allegro. In the third movement she faltered, made one or two false starts, and finally gave up. The last time I had heard the Andante played more beautifully was by Myra Hess, years ago in the National Gallery. "Me memory's goin'," said Mrs. Adam, "I got to keep playing these things if I'm not to lose them. But I can give you a little Chopin." She played a Nocturne and two waltzes. When I asked her if she was tired she said, "I practice five hours a day, regular."

She told me she had been born in Hackney in 1864 and had played in her first concert when she was five. At the age of seven, billed as the Infant Pianist, she had performed at the Covent Garden Proms, and at 11 had been awarded one of two scholarships at the National Training School for Music (now the Royal College of Music). There were, she said, more than five hundred competitors. The scholarship gave her seven years abroad, and introduced her incidentally to her future husband. Herr Adam, a piano manufacturer, had heard her play at a concert in Aachen, and when she returned to England he came too, always among her audiences, at St. James', at the Crystal Palace, at Grosvenor Hall. In 1885 they were married at St. Stephen's, Hampstead, and then for nearly thirty years travelled about Europe from one concert-hall to another, Paris, Vienna, Berlin.

Nothing meant very much to her except music, and her feeling about the war was chiefly that it had all been an intolerable and rather trivial interruption to more serious things. "That 'Itler" had refused to allow her to give concerts in Germany, so she had spent the Nazi years travelling about Europe. "I and Elsa, we'd never an idea that there would come a war!" It caught them in Aachen. The old lady and her daughter shut themselves up in their house, and lived there outcast and suspect, always afraid of being denounced, year after year, till at last the town was in the front line and all the civilians were turned out at a moment's notice. Elsa and Mrs. Adam found themselves outside their house at 11 o'clock at night in the rain, their only possessions two suitcases and the dog Patsy. Mrs. Adam travelled in what she described as a "cow-cart"; Elsa walked. Somehow they reached the Rhine, slept three nights on the bare earth at Arloch, were pushed on from there to Bonn, from Bonn to Cologne, crushed together almost suffocated in a cattle-truck as far as Hanover, and landed up finally at Goslar. She was just eighty years old.

They were at Goslar for two days before they were denounced as spies. Mrs. Adam had given a defiant concert the night before; but the landlady had listened at the key-hole, and had reported her as a suspicious character to the Party *Kreisleiter* "It was my accent," she said. "You can tell I'm English at a glance. I can't get my tongue round German. My husband tried and tried, but I wouldn't learn. When you've got your piano you don't want books of grammar. *They* knew I was English."

She was put into a bare room without water, heat or light. She had been warned and threatened and persecuted from place to place, but perhaps they thought it scarcely worth while to send an octogenarian to a concentration camp. This time they decided that Patsy must be killed, and the old lady rebelled. "I gave 'em the slip," she said triumphantly. Somehow she reached her son's home at Rottach in Bavaria, but was only there two days before she was discovered and sent to a camp at Freising, "a disgusting dirty place it was, I can tell you—twenty-four of us in a room, and ten babies, always crying." After eleven weeks she gave them the slip again and eventually managed to get back here to her first home. Before anyone could bother further about her, Runstedt's great offensive had begun, the Americans retreated, advanced again, the town was captured, lost, recaptured. The S.S. had made their last stand in the big hotel where, before the war, all the millionaires of Europe and America had come to take the waters. The town was shelled and bombed into a desert for nearly five months on end.

When the end came, she was still at her piano, indomitably Cockney. "One night I was awake and saw our room full lighted, and I went to the window and the Americans were going quietly by, and next day the white flags were out and all was peace." She had almost at once written to ENSA asking for an engagement, and to Dr. Raemann, the town Music Director; but her age was against her, and people seemed unwilling to believe that an 82-year old lady could fill a concert hall. "But I could! It isn't the age, it's the hands. If *they're* young, *you're* young! I'd like to show these Germans for once . . ."

Dr. Raemann was politely contemptuous. At the age of 82 one is either a curiosity or a nuisance; one is no longer a serious artist. It isn't in the nature of things. The nature of things, we pointed out, does not often include women like Mrs. Adam. Would he not at least come and have dinner with us, and then hear the old lady play?

When one lives on 1,000 calories a day, one is prepared to endure anything for the sake of a meal, and Dr. Raemann agreed. We warned the old lady that we were going to bring him round one evening. She was pleased, but not at all astonished. She was a great artist, and why should not a Music Director be eager to hear her play?

When the day came, Dr. Raemann's feelings were obviously mixed. He had just eaten the best dinner he had had for nearly twelve months, and was, therefore, eager to gratify the whims of his hosts. On the other hand, the prospect of hearing an octogenarian pianist playing to him in an unheated and half-ruined house clearly depressed him. But by this time there was glass in the windows, and the shabby battered room was brilliantly lit by an electric bulb. Mrs. Adam welcomed us and after a few minutes, without a trace of nervousness, sat down at the piano and announced that she would play Schumann's Piano Concerto in A Minor, putting in the orchestral passages for our benefit. "It used to be my favourite concert piece," she said. Then she leant back her head in a characteristic attitude, and after a brief pause with her hands resting on the keys, she began playing.

When she had finished, she turned with that unconscious grandeur to greet our applause. Dr. Raemann said nothing. He blew his nose very loudly, and then, nodding his head, went across and shook the old lady's hand till I thought he would never stop. Then and there he made her promise to play the A Minor Concerto at the first concert of the Summer Festival.

I saw her for the last time on the eve of my departure. I tried once more to make her come to England, talked about the revival of music there, the concerts and the new composers, but she would have none of it. She wanted to play in Berlin again. She wanted to show these Germans something . . . I think she felt, also, a stubborn determination to stick to her home. It had been hers for half a century, and not all the T.N.T. which had crashed down on one of the worst-bombed towns of Western Germany had been able to shift her. There was Patsy curled up in a corner of the settee; there she was herself, still sitting at her grand pinao, practising for five hours a day.

As I left her she began to play. The notes followed me into the sunlight down the old stone steps, which alone amid all those hopeless hills of debris had kept their integrity, and which, when everything had lost meaning and purpose, had remained indomitably themselves.

RONALD FULLER

MARVEL (AFTER MARVELL)

The highbrow fan henceforth must shun
The gallic feasts of Studio One,
And from his mind expel
Gabin and Fernandel.

They nothing common did, or mean,
Upon that memorable screen,
Nor asked Lamour to play
La Femme du Boulanger.

But restless Hollywood is not
Content to gild a native plot,
And now her claims advance
To rape the screens of France.

And, that the Dollar may increase
Its *mission civilisatrice*,
Some strips of celluloid
Are doomed to be destroyed.

'Tis madness (with our realm in pawn)
To damn this technicolor Dawn;
Le jour se lève, perhaps
Elsewhere, for other chaps;

Who, with a nasal-tonic cast
Will give these flicks some pep at last,
Casting the stale and old
Into their chromium mould.

As Cæsars they, ere long, to Gaul,
Pushing the weakest to the wall;
The arts that served to build
The film, the flicks have killed.

REGINALD REYNOLDS

MUSIC AND PROGRESS

WHAT is the true sphere of the musical historian, how does it differ from that of the musicologist, and what right has either to speak of "progress" in the art of music?—these are some of the fundamental questions posed in a lecture delivered at Oxford last November by J. A. Westrup. During the interval between delivery and publication,* the lecturer has succeeded Sir Hugh Allen as Heather Professor; but no extraneous claim is needed to recommend so stimulating an essay in musical aesthetics. Like all good lectures, it is too short: it stimulates rather than satisfies, and one hopes that the professor will before long find an opportunity to expand and elaborate his argument.

He challenges a number of received ideas, some of them the products of our own time, others inherited from our fathers; and he does not hesitate, when necessary, to utter an urbane rebuke even to Sir Hubert Parry and Sir Donald Tovey. Parry's curt dismissal of the seventeenth century as "musically almost a blank" must seem highly absurd to our foremost Monteverdi scholar; and he is hardly less irked by Tovey's assumption that, at a certain point in the past, music becomes "too archaic or inaccessible to give us aesthetic data." It is all, we are assured, simply a question of familiarity, we must not think even of Oriental music as of something irretrievably beyond our ken; "with sufficient labour and time we could come to understand it"; and the difficulties in the way of such an understanding are purely material.

But the fallacy which Professor Westrup is especially concerned to expel from our minds is the fallacy of progress. In the eighteenth century, and for a greater part of the nineteenth, the belief in musical progress was almost universally entertained. The music of earlier centuries was thought barbarous and crude; Beethoven was held to have "advanced the art" of Mozart and Haydn as surely as they themselves had surpassed their predecessors. Of course such an attitude was by no means confined to music. To Dryden, Chaucer appeared an uncouth genius; and Italian renaissance painters habitually wrote of their art as though it were a kind of science whose frontiers were being continually advanced by the progressive discovery of the laws of perspective. But in the domains of literature and the visual arts, complacency was kept within reasonable bounds by the tremendous prestige of the ancients; one could not give oneself unlimited airs beneath the eternal gaze of Pheidias and Homer.

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* *The Meaning of Musical History*. By J. A. WESTRUP. *Oxford University Press*. 1s. 6d.

Music knew no such salutary check, for virtually nothing survived from classical or medieval times but a vast amount of indigestible theory. On the other hand a series of extremely rapid technical advances in every department of his art gave the eighteenth century musician the inevitable self-esteem of the self-made man. To the nineteenth century, Beethoven was simply Haydn-and-Mozart *plus;* and to the devout early Wagnerian, Wagner was Beethoven *plus*. That, however, was the end. Since Wagner, no composer has been regarded by any large body of music-lovers as the Apotheosis of the Art; and by now we no longer think of musical composition as proceeding from crude beginnings in a steady curve of increasing excellence. We have replaced this overall conception by that of a series of lesser evolutionary periods: the polyphonic period "culminating" in Palestrina, the baroque period in Bach, the Viennese period in Beethoven, and so on.

Professor Westrup opposes this picture of musical history as firmly as the other, and in general terms I feel sure he is right. But is not his refusal to entertain the idea of "progress" too absolute? Consider Purcell and Montiverdi—two of the most gifted dramatic composers who ever lived, yet none of their operas is publicly given to-day. Why? Professor Westrup would say: because the public is unfamiliar with their language, and therefore unable to perceive their value. True; but is it not also true to say that the operas of Monteverdi and Purcell are the imperfect experiments of genius, and that this is so because the composers' lives fell at a period of musical evolution when opera was still something of an ugly duckling? In short, it strikes me as possible that a composer may be unfortunate in the date of his birth; but I fear that Professor Westrup would regard such a suggestion as meaningless.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

John Gabriel Borkman. This was Ibsen's last play but one, and the performance on August 12 was so admirable because it handled an utterly grim theme with a resolute understanding of its tragic poetry. The adaptation (a very simple one) took full advantage of Ibsen's masterly construction, so that the absence of a narrator was never felt: from the very beginning one was in the thick of it, fixed to one's chair by the paralysing voltage of the characters. For this is a play about that most terrifying of manias—the love of Power; that Franklyn Dyall was able, by the modulations of his voice alone, to bring out all the fuliginous poetry in Borkman's ruthless obsession, gives the measure of his excellence in the part. But indeed, the conviction and intensity with which the whole cast invested their roles was astonishing. I shall not soon forget the long opening sequence, in which, thanks to Cathleen Nesbitt's immitigably steely diction and Gladys Young's covert violence, one gradually sensed the tragic folly and injustice of the conflict between Mrs. Borkman and Ella Rentheim. For in this play everyone is on the wrong track—including, one feels even the lovers themselves, since Erhart Borkman has the ruthlessness of his parents hidden under the romantic charm of youth, and implicit in the scene of his break with his mother and Ella is the certainty that this sinister trait will before long spoil his own life and that of the middle-aged widow who has counted the world well lost for his sake. Robert Rietty, competent as his performance was in every other respect, did not quite manage to drive home this point, when at last the three women between them force his hand. But this was a comparatively small (and even dubious) fault in an almost perfect production, which augurs well for Drama's contribution to the Third Programme.

Good Company. No doubt; but if these programmes do anything except satisfy a momentary curiosity, it is to place beyond a peradventure the futility of the unscripted broadcast. Experiments with dictaphones and shorthand writers have long ago established the curious fact that exactly recorded conversation not only sounds unnatural but is extremely dull to listen to, however brilliant the talkers. Last Saturday three of the best conversationalists I know—Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, Lord David Cecil, and Raymond Mortimer—made almost nothing of a subject (the Power of Words) in which they all are at home—simply because the circumstances did not allow of the ease, the play of gesture and interruption, and so on, which make up about two-fifths of conversational expression. They left gaping holes of silence, which suggested nervousness and lack of ideas; they laughed unnaturally, at inappropriate moments; and above all they left the impression that they were not saying what they really felt, or at any rate were wording their sentences uncharacteristically. This kind of failure is instructive, because it shows to how great an extent the import of what someone is saying depends upon his lighting a cigarette in the middle of a sentence, and then hammering in an unexpected word or phrase by chucking the match into the fireplace. And the radio equivalent of these imponderable factors can, I suggest, only be produced by a carefully planned script, a good deal of rehearsal, and the minimum of "acting" which these preparations involve. "Les Trois Amis" should be the model for this type of broadcast.

Perfect accuracy is a virtue sometimes underrated by pianists; but Malcuzynski reminds us of it in a very positive manner. His playing is unusually cool and precise, and the dynamics are so unexaggerated that proper expression is often sacrificed. As a Chopin player I do not think he yet approaches Rubinstein, but his virtuosity (at the moment his most salient quality) is certainly of the best kind. And while I am on the subject of pianists I should like to pay tribute to Marjorie Blackburn's brilliant and charming performance of Medtner's Second Concerto. This is a work which deserves to be at least as popular as Rachmaninoff's Third, for it is very nearly as "effective" and contains more genuine music.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*Sunday, August 25th.* Concert (3 p.m.); Virginia Woolf (7 p.m.); Atomic Energy (9.15 p.m.); Time for Verse (10.38 p.m.).

Monday. The Last Chance (9.15 p.m.).

Tuesday. This Correspondence Must now Cease (10.45 p.m.). "The Demon Lover" (Midland, 11.3 p.m.).

Wednesday. Portrait of an Age (G. M. Young, L.P. 3 p.m.); G. B. Shaw (V. S. Pritchett, 6.20 p.m.).

Thursday. Concert (3 p.m.).

Friday. Bordeaux Mixture (1.10 p.m.); Table for Two (6.20 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"The Searching Wind," at the Carlton

Quite a lot may be said, and should be said, against *The Searching Wind.* It comes from a play and remains stagey; it seeks to build up an indictment; where it should make us angry, we grow restive and more than a little inclined to meet argument with argument. Mr. William Dieterle, in fact, has done better before, notably with his biographies of Zola and Ehrlich. All that is unfortunately true.

The other day (this is not altogether a digression), between two films I have forgotten, I saw the newsreels of Bikini, Atom Bomb No. 5. I wonder when we shall have to stop counting them? This one, on the Pacific horizon, sent up a cauliflower of smoke and spray 10,000 feet in the air, and the event had been photographed from many angles, ending with a mechanically taken close-up and an aerial view that made the explosion, ringed and globular, look like the birth of Saturn. And what is to be said, and felt, about that? No more, apparently, than the commentator's already threadbare remarks about beauty and a weapon to end civilisation. As if to ram home the point, we were shown then a clash at the Paris Conference between M. Molotov and Mr. Evatt; as laborious a spectacle as the other had been enthralling. Not less deadly, however. Given the weapon, here are the mistrusts, fears, arrogances by which we shall come to use it.

Now, the considerable merit of *The Searching Wind* is that, despite faults, its picture of evasion *entre les guerres* does relate personal lives with world events, does send the imagination not only back but forward so that we exclaim, "Yes, and it's starting again, as though nothing had happened." Perhaps an atom bomb will prove more deterrent than a Hitler; perhaps, already, we feel more personally involved—we in our not so tight little island, the Americans across an ocean which atom rockets will turn into a channel. Perhaps not. The argument of *The Searching Wind* is that there was plenty of time to stop Hitler and that a particular man, ambassador in various European capitals, evaded his responsibilities. We see the kind of man he is: well-meaning, anxious, intelligent, compromising. He compromises in love by marrying a woman he doesn't love because she consents and is unlikely to interfere with his smugness. She welcomes the society of semi-Fascists and quislings against whom he tries to preserve an impeccable neutrality. As the years go by, with Hitler marching over more frontiers and married life becoming more intolerable, he turns to his real love, a woman journalist with actively anti-Fascist resolutions. In the end they all meet at a dinner-party after the war to thrash things out (a stage device this), and the last word is said by the son who, having lost a leg in action, accuses his parents and particularly his father. That lost leg is a piece of dramatic foul play. The implication, however, is not so much—as some reviewers have taken it—that one man, even an American ambassador, could have prevented war by sending home more shocking reports, but that, like everyone else, he shifted his responsibility, while possessing powers that others lacked. He was concerned chiefly to maintain a position; so also were the more active appeasers and quislings of whom he disapproved. This was the conspiracy in which everyone, down to the indifferent small fry, had a share.

As I have said, the mixture of personal biography with public events does not always come off; most of the characters are given some wooden speechifying to contend with; but even so, the film succeeds in making us stir painfully under the eiderdown of the past. From a good cast the performances of Robert Young, Sylvia Sidney, Dudley Digges and Albert Basserman stand out in memory.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

RUSSIAN ANXIETY

SIR,—Dr. Ernest Jones, I regret, joins that band of eminent scientists who sally forth from their own fields to use their great prestige, but not unfortunately their scientific impartiality and judgment, in others Psycho-analysis has, and will have, a great part to play in sociology and politics, but that part will be more difficult if its leaders, by rash analogies, pretend to an omniscience which their subject does not yet allow. We know very little about the relationship between the group and the individual and even less about the psycho-dynamics of political and social groups. I feel that a dangerous anthropomorphism has crept into Dr. Ernest Jones' letter. Russia and its leaders seem to be cartoon figures like John Bull, Britannia, Uncle Sam, or Popski of an early *Daily Sketch* strip.

Some time ago a friend of mine who works in a neurosis centre had a trawler skipper as a patient, a man who had been many years at sea. He had lately taken over a new tug and had been sent to hospital because he insisted that the ship was top heavy and therefore unseaworthy. Everyone agreed that his fears were ridiculous. He made little progress, and continued to assert that the ship was unsafe. One morning he was seen to be more cheerful and said that he would like to return to sea, adding "You see, I've just heard that my ship capsized last week." Perhaps Dr. Ernest Jones is in a similar position

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regarding Russia and its rulers, who have after all more experience of rough weather than any other group of statesmen in the world.

No doubt he would say to them, with the same sort of confidence that my friend used to reassure the skipper, "I venture the opinion that no one in the Western World except perhaps a Communist considers that Britain and U.S.A. are likely to attack U.S.S.R."

It is clear from accounts in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION during the last three months, that in the U.S.A. this exact course of action has been openly advocated in some sections of the press; that in China the main political party is banking upon a Russo-American clash, and that in Germany ex-Nazis (who really weren't Nazis at all!) hope for such an event. A Jewish doctor, an army colleague of mine, himself a Viennese, wrote from Austria some months back to say that some of the Austrians he had met seemed to be eagerly awaiting an "Allied" attack on Russia. He was astonished at their folly. I have myself heard army and naval officers speaking about "finishing Russia off while we are about it."

This would be enough to account for suspicion and fear, but in addition there is the atomic bomb, a weapon so dangerous, so easily put into action with such irreversible effects that I think that before describing Russia's nervousness as "inordinate intolerance" and comparing it with a neurotic woman's fear of mice, the great psycho-analyst should analyse his own feelings towards his Russian patient. I hope that you and Dr. Ernest Jones will forgive me if, because of my present employment, I sign myself SERVICE PSYCHIATRIST

WIVES IN GERMANY

SIR,—Perhaps you will allow me to comment on your remarks about conditions of life in the B.A.O.R. for wives of officers and men who may be permitted to go out there.

Whilst there is no substantial dispute about the accuracy of the ration scale which you published, I suggest that the way in which the facts are presented gives a picture which is neither accurate nor fair. For instance, it might be thought that the rations which are listed in your article are a free issue to the wife of a British soldier in Germany whereas, in fact, the weekly ration costs the individual 15s. 2d. The monthly ration of spirits consists of one bottle of whisky and half a bottle of gin—which is less than that obtainable by many people in this country if they happen to have been registered as customers with wine merchants before the war.

You refer to the "War Office taxi service costing 2d. a mile if the regular free bus service is infra dig." In fact, there is a transport service at 2d. a mile for cars and ¾d. a mile for vans subject to an overall limit of 500 miles travel per month. But, this service is available for use only when public transport is not available and is not obtainable, on grounds of prestige or otherwise, if public transport is available. The only type of entertainment which is free is that supplied by amateur theatrical clubs—all other entertainment is charged for.

The writer then asks "What justification can there be for this sort of luxury in the married quarters at Bad Oeynhausen?" and expresses the view that it is "an outrageous waste of money and grossly unfair that these women of leisure with no employment except to keep their husbands out of trouble with German girls should be kept in this way at public expense." I would remind you that the so-called "women of leisure" are the wives of British officers and soldiers who have at least another year to serve in Germany and who in a large majority of cases have been separated from their families for several years. The wives and families have shared in all the hardships and hazards to which the rest of the civilian population have been exposed during the war and, in addition, have had in most cases to bear the heavy burden of long separation from their husbands which non-Service wives seldom had to face. I venture to think that it will be news to most of them to know that they have ever qualified as "women of leisure."

I cannot think that the average British taxpayer who knows all the facts will begrudge the treatment which we hope to give to Army wives and families who go to Germany where, incidentally, they will have to put up with some disadvantages and discomforts which they would not experience at home. Both the wives and their husbands have richly deserved the best treatment which the nation can afford.

E. H. O'DONNELL,
Director Public Relations, Major-General
War Office.

SIR,—Of the many letters recently published, those of V. Jabez-Smith in to-day's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and Air Commodore Spaight in *The Times* of July 24th must have most aroused in decent, thinking readers, feelings of shame and exasperation.

The reasons for which B.A.O.R. wives and families are to be allowed to go to Germany, sad though they are, are valid: but why in making this concession a Socialist Government should tolerate, subsidise even, luxury living and ostentation such as would be impossible on pay at home, is incomprehensible. Furthermore, now that the fighting is over there is no justification—at the expense of pocket and larder of the ordinary tax-payer—for such things as higher ration scales than those that pertain at home, and the distribution of duty-free spirits and tobacco.

From its vast experience of organisation and administration of garrisons, the War Office should surely be able to produce a satisfactory system of married and single quarters in Germany and thus avoid building up a legacy of hatred—I would even say justifiable hatred—such as must inevitably result from a pursuance of the present policy. I would suggest that until an adequate garrison scheme is in operation, whatever the cost, it would be better to bring men home on regular short leaves of say one week every three months, or, perhaps, organise holiday camps where men and families could be reunited periodically. And when I say families I would not exclude fiancees and nominated girl-friends. I am sure Mr. Butlin could very quickly provide a solution if he were asked to do so.

Having myself served abroad, I appreciate very fully every phase of the unhappy problem. And I know from personal observation how deep is the resentment of the common man abroad when he sees the best of everything, food, service, accommodation, snatched at fantastic prices by the at best unwelcome foreigners, who, as often as not, lead lives punctuated by endless rounds of cocktail parties and other insensate extravagances paid for out of allowances and "wangles" that would not bear investigation. If we are ever to shake off the opprobrium of "Perfidious Albion" and win the real respect of our Continental neighbours, now is the time to do something about it. In the interests of economy at least we could begin by cutting down personnel until every man has a full day's work to do with pay and amenities not so disproportionately high in comparison with those at home. C. E. IFFLA

1 Ovington Street, S.W.3.

THE SOLDIER'S RIGHTS

SIR,—Whilst those who are serving, have served, or will be required to serve in the Armed Forces will appreciate Field-Marshal Montgomery's recent statement on the amelioration of conditions in the Services, it is important, particularly in view of the maintenance for the time being of the system of conscription, that the unsatisfactory state of military law regarding discipline should not be overlooked.

Lip service is paid to the principle that the soldier is a "citizen in uniform," but examination of the service codes of law leads to the conclusion that not only is the soldier deprived of many of the fundamental privileges of citizenship, such, for example, as the right of trial by legally qualified judges and juries on serious charges of crime, but his exercise of his liberties as a subject is rigorously curtailed.

The necessity for the drastic revision of military law in these matters is illustrated by a recent court-martial in which Corporal Sherman of the R.A.S.C. was charged under Section 40 of the Army Act with conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline in that he, when in uniform, engaged in a public house in a country village in political discussions with civilians and distributed political literature. Although this soldier was acquitted of the charge, the fact that it was considered a proper matter for the exercise of disciplinary powers indicates a state of mind on the part of the military authorities that the serving man should be cut off from normal intercourse with the community. Such an attitude, possibly defensible, though thoroughly undesirable in a democracy, as long as the soldier was a volunteer "contracting in" to service discipline, is now outmoded and reactionary. The time is ripe for a thorough revision of the present archaic system. The N.C.C.L. is embarking on a campaign to this end, and hopes to attract to its support all those sections of the public who believe that the principle of the soldier citizen should become a reality. ELIZABETH A. ALLEN

National Council of Civil Liberties. Gen. Sec.

GOVERNMENT FILMS

SIR,—I read with great interest the article in your last issue on Government-made films. Like most people I have seen many of these, often useful enough but generally dull. Recently I was asked to choose some to accompany a British Council Exhibition going to Sweden and other northern countries dealing with our British efforts in town-planning. So little, however, appeared good in them that in the end the idea, I believe, was given up, some of the selectors even suggesting the Council had better fall back on George Formby comedies. Now at last, and since this happened, a film called *The Way We Live* has had a trade show and then one to the critics and is to have its première on the 16th of this month, though but for the outcry in the press this latter would not have been given. At last we have a film primarily devoted to the great adventure of replanning a large town yet full of human interest and apparently, in the opinion of all the critics, of great entertainment value. Why, now that it has been proved possible for such things to come about in the hands of the right artists, should we not have other films on all the great Government schemes for social betterment, like the nationalization of the coal mines, the abolition of unemployment and the like? Why should not the Government spend its money in future in this vital yet educational way instead of frittering it away as it does at present on small second-class ventures?

The Athenaeum. CHARLES REILLY

H. G. WELLS

SIR,—As one of the few survivors who can claim more than sixty years friendship with H. G. Wells, I write to correct one misconception in the otherwise very penetrating analysis made by G.B.S.

It is not the case that his career was one of "early promotion without a single failure or check." For five or six years (1888-93) he lived in Grub Street. Editors did not "jump at his stories at the first glance," except the editor of one weekly paper whose policy it was to take and pay for the first story by any unknown author, looking for recoupment from sales to the admiring circle of friends and relations who for weeks went on hoping to see "our Johnny" in print. This editor accepted and paid one pound for a very sentimental story, but never published it. A second, offered to the same paper, was refused as "not sufficiently interesting." I remember other MSS. which never got into print. It may be that H.G. "never missed a meal" (I am not sure of that), but he certainly instructed me in the art of concealing shabbiness in clothing, and he knew Mr. Lewisham's celluloid collar at first hand.

During those years he was also haunted by the expectation of early death. Talking with him about some new invention or discovery, I remarked that we should live to see some wonderful things. "You will, but I shall not," was his reply. And on the occasion of one of his relapses he wrote to me: "The hungry maw will presently devour the Prophet of the Undelivered Spell, and the unwarned world hurry on to damnation." He lived to deliver his spell, and it is a warned world that is now hurrying —whither?

Those readers who are interested in H.G.'s early career would do well to supplement the Autobiography by reference to Geoffrey West's *H. G. Wells: a sketch for a picture* (1930).

A. MORLEY DAVIES

Arngrove, Amersham, Bucks.

THE TATE GALLERY

SIR,—May I be allowed to correct two errors of fact in Mr. Marvell's extremely interesting article "English Painting and French Taste" which appeared in your issue of August 10th?

First, it is incorrect to state that Graham Sutherland was represented in the Tate Exhibition recently held in Paris by war pictures only. The exhibition included his large "Green Tree Form" painted before the war.

Secondly, Mr. Marvell states that the exhibition in question comprised "a good selection of pictures from the Tate (with a few very necessary additions)." In fact there were no such additions. In referring to additions, Mr. Marvell was probably thinking of those works in the exhibition which had originally been acquired by the War Artists' Advisory Committee. These, however (and it is no reflection on your critic that he was not aware of the fact), were chosen by the Trustees at the invitation of the War Artists' Advisory Committee for allocation to the permanent collection at the Tate.

Perhaps it may be of interest to your readers to know that this exhibition is being shown, under the auspices of the British Council, in a number of European capitals. The Trustees welcomed the release of pictures for this purpose, since, out of the 36 galleries at the Tate, only six are in a sufficient state of repair to be available for exhibition, and because the moment is unlikely to recur when it will be possible, without prejudicing the interest of visitors at home, to lend abroad some of the best modern British paintings from the Millbank collection.

JOHN ROTHENSTEIN

Millbank, S.W.1. Director and Keeper of The Tate Gallery.

PROF. KRABBE

SIR,—The last paragraph of Mr. E. S. P. Haynes' review of Prof. Buckland's book on Jurisprudence can only be understood as meaning that (a) a German writer called Krabbe ascribed to the Germans a special consciousness of law or right (the German word "Recht" means law as well as right) a pretence which was irreconcilable with the present lawlessness in Germany and the atrocities committed by the Nazis, and that (b) Prof. Buckland had an absurd veneration for this kind of writing.

The truth is that Prof. Krabbe is not a German but a *Dutch* jurist (see Dr. Friedmann's *Legal Theory*, London, 1944, pp. 9 and 393) whose book seems to have been first published in the German language; it was, in 1922, published in English under the title *The Modern Idea of the State*. He shares with many Continental writers, e.g. the Frenchman Duguit, the opinion that law originates from an inner feeling of right, which *every human being* possesses.

Prof. Buckland does not "venerate" this opinion, but opposes it throughout his book.

Dr. J. H. GEBHARDT, LL.B. (Lond.)

43, Roland Gardens, S.W.7.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

The protean character of Eros could hardly receive fuller, fairer or more eloquent representation than in the four celebrated French love-stories of which English renderings have recently been assembled under the general title of *Great French Romances**. Here are portraits of the daimonic divinity designed at different social periods by four artists of widely different temperament—a court lady of the reign of Louis XIV, a somewhat obscure clerical adventurer of the early eighteenth century, a military client of Philippe-Egalité who died, disappointed, in the service of Napoleon, and a Romantic novelist who carried into the field of novel-writing the intoxicating ideas of Napoleonic grandeur. *La Princesse de Clèves* was first published in 1678; *Manon Lescaut*, as the seventh volume of the *Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité*, in 1731; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* in 1782; *La Duchesse de Langeais* in 1834. Scope and method vary immensely; the writers' sensibility appears to have developed in some respects, in others to have deteriorated; the emotion with which they deal changes and takes on new colourings from novelist to novelist: yet one conclusion seems to be driven home by each successive story. It is not physical passion that causes havoc so much as the subsidiary passions for which *l'amour physique* often acts as stalking-horse—vanity, the competitive instinct, the lust for power and prestige. More passionately than they love the beloved, these lovers are attached to a dream or ideal or fantasy of which the beloved forms the centre.

In turn, we read of chivalric love, obsessive love, love as the appetite for spiritual domination, and love as the minister of a high romantic pride. No doubt it is a reflection on the disillusioned age we live in that love as depicted by Madame de Lafayette—the ceremonious encounter of two beautifully matched opponents, who respect as well as love, and esteem as well as want—is far less comprehensible to us, even far less sympathetic, than the emotions described by the Abbé Prévost and Choderlos de Laclos. My own admiration for *La Princesse de Clèves* remains, I am obliged to admit, decidedly platonic. An historical novel without the smallest period-flavour, a love story from which all the hesitations and turbulent untidiness of most love-affairs have been carefully excluded, that frigid little masterpiece appeals to the reader's imagination chiefly through his intellect. The Princesse de Clèves and her adorer are essentially *âmes bien nées*. Honour is the mainspring of their personal conduct; and it is the Princess's regard for honour and her sense of moral nicety that impel her to decline the hand of the fascinating Duc de Nemours. Between them hovers her husband's shadow, and the suspicion that her avowal of her passion for the Duke may possibly have hastened the Prince's tragic demise. Besides, she shrinks from the extremities of happiness and depths of jealous desperation into which she feels that she would plunge if she were ever to become the wife of a man she loves so wildly. Placing honour above pleasure, and peace above fulfilment, she retires with appropriate pomp to the safety of a religious house. Monsieur de Nemours is vastly chagrined; but after a few years, the novelist informs us in her chilly and lucid style, he is able to forget his grief and overcome his yearning. The Romantic era was still far away. Not for nothing had Madame de Lafayette been the friend, confidant and (it was believed) the mistress of La Rochefoucauld.

Entering the pages of *Manon Lescaut*, we drop at a single stride from the decorum of the court to the hurly-burly of the underworld, and exchange love as a dignified preoccupation, capable of being controlled by reason and harnessed to the rules of honour, for love as a rampant and undignified obsession that carries all before it. The book is little more than an episode. What makes the episode so complete and strangely moving? As a story *Manon Lescaut* is by no means well-constructed; for Prévost speeds up the catastrophe with the help of several adventitious incidents—among others, a burglary and a disastrous conflagration—which contribute nothing either to the development of the main theme or to our understanding of his characters. Yet, in spite of clumsy construction and much conventional moralising, it grows and gains impressiveness. Prévost evidently was no psychologist: although he felt, observed and understood, it was not his way to analyse; but the nature of his hero's problem is presented in clear dramatic outline. The incurable passion is the inexplicable passion. Reason cannot prevail where reason cannot penetrate. Des Grieux loves Manon all the more consumingly because he does not trust her. His inexcusable and unreasonable infatuation exists on a plane beyond the reach of intellect, yet has sunk its roots into the deepest fibres of his emotional and intellectual being. Prévost delineates this situation without any of the descriptive apparatus that would have been employed by a French or English novelist writing after Balzac. Manon is a radiant yet a shadowy figure. We assume that she was uncommonly seductive; but what was the colour of her skin, and whether she was robust or fragile, are questions on which the story-teller leaves us largely unenlightened. Love-making goes almost undescribed. The effect of the narrative is wholly unsalacious. Prévost's theme provides its own background, and generates its own spiritual and erotic atmosphere. Manon can never be faithful: the Chevalier can never believe in the fidelity she again and again promises, but cannot abandon the hope that her last infidelity (in which there were, of course, special extenuating circumstances) may, if he hopes desperately enough, never be repeated. He cannot resist the voluptuous alternations of her cruelty and her kindness, her deceit and her simplicity, the natural yet deadly grace with which she has wound herself from the beginning about his heart and senses. And, when he buries her at last in the American desert, it is with the conviction that he has "committed to the earth all that it had ever contained most perfect and peerless," not a courtesan but a nonpareil among women, a triumph of the creator's art.

Whereas Des Grieux's love is a form of abjection, an ingenious method of self-punishment, to the prodigious protagonists of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* sexual passion is first and foremost a means of self-assertion, and sexual *expertise* a weapon they employ to control or crush their fellows. Both Prévost and Choderlos de Laclos were slightly disreputable adventurers. But, while the cleric was an opportunist of the weak and wandering sort, the artillery officer was a trusted agent of Philippe Duc d'Orléans, and a versatile and designing frequenter of political ante-rooms and back-stairs. As a novelist, he is the cynic by profession, the analyst *par excellence*, delighted to trace the complexity of motives—usually pernicious motives—underlying any human action, and to detect the element of self-interest that enters even into good deeds. Again, his book is not salacious, though the happenings it relates are often extremely scandalous; for the characters' objects, as distinct from their actions, are not predominantly sexual, and what they desire is less to enjoy beauty than to break down the resistance of another human personality, less to lose themselves in a mistress's or a lover's arms than to write their names large across the mind of innocence. The victory they aim at is a victory of the ego. And in pursuit of that victory they are as conscientious and indefatigable as the most hard-worked politician.

Choderlos de Laclos was a harbinger of revolution. There is no need to consider him as a deliberate social satirist, bent on exposing the corruption of the *Ancien Régime;* but, as a writer and a political agent, he had his share in undermining it. From the Revolution emerged Bonaparte and the long romantic dream of Napoleonic glory, which, after the Emperor's fall, was transplanted to the fruitful soil of the new romantic literature. The universe of Madame de Lafayette was stable and self-assured. Honour was its key-note; but Glory belongs to a gimcrack civilisation, built by military *nouveaux riches*, together with Etruscan furniture, *sans chemises* fashions and generals of twenty-two. The generals disappeared; the bees made way for lilies; the cult of Glory could manifest itself only in a high romantic attitude, in the melancholy of a Byron, the musings of a Chateaubriand. Balzac was unfitted by nature for a striking or romantic role, a greasy and swarthy upstart frequently derided by the aristocratic ladies he was at tremendous pains to fascinate. In *La Duchesse de Langeais*, we have the literary by-product of just such a misadventure. The Duchesse de Castries had patronised, allured, teased and ultimately rejected him; and Balzac returned from Aix, where he had been wooing the Duchess and hobnobbing with her distinguished uncle, the ancient Duc de Fitz-James, in a state of nervous agitation bordering on breakdown. *La Duchesse de Langeais* is a spirited account of how an aristocratic *allumeuse*, who scorns the advances of a great man, ideally should be treated. General de Montriveau has the constitution of a hero, the soul of a poet and the muscles of a tiger. He is generous and wildly passionate: the Duchesse de Langeais, on the other hand, is narcissistic, prudish, calculating. She beckons him, and she holds him off, and derives, meanwhile, a perverse vicarious satisfaction from the torments of baffled love that she knows she makes him suffer. It is his Glory against hers . . . This part of the narrative might perhaps be described as reality intensified. "*Life may not really be like this—few men are so ardent, few women quite so icy. But don't you wish it were?*" Balzac seems to demand from his enchanted reader. Then suddenly our feet have left the ground. We are wafted away into the phantasmagoric landscape of Balzacian imaginings that he managed to superimpose on the prosaic Parisian scene. Montriveau invokes the assistance of a mysterious secret society, the Thirteen, of which he is a member; and the Duchess is kidnapped, terrorised, released (all during the course of a ball, without her servants or her fellow guests becoming aware of what has happened) and at once falls head over heels in love with her masterful admirer, who incontinently spurns his idol and rejects importunities. She slips off to a convent; and Montriveau and the trusty Thirteen, having with endless patience discovered her retreat and scaled the convent walls, appear too late to save her. The Duchess has uttered her last sigh, and a choir of Spanish nuns are chanting round her death-bed . . .

"It is nothing now but a dream," muses Montriveau, as the corpse of his beloved is consigned to the Mediterranean, weighted down with cannon-shot. The story itself is a dream: it is also something far more real and lasting. It does not dissolve as an ordinary dream dissolves; for it has the verisimilitude that transcends realism, and into the bare bones of this preposterous narrative, with its crudities and its absurdities and touches of schoolboy melodrama, Balzac has somehow infused the tempestuous breath of genius. The nineteenth was a vulgar magnificent century; and Balzac is always vulgar on an heroic and imposing scale, as befitted the prophet of an age whose titanic executive energy was to deform and transfigure the traditional face of Europe. He wrote better stories than *La Duchesse de Langeais*—stories in which he dealt with love more subtly and human nature much more broadly; but none is more characteristic both of his gifts and of his defects; I am glad that it should have been chosen (though in a not very happy English rendering) to conclude the present series. *Great French Romances* deserves a successor. Why not a second volume with a selection of later material—from *Madame Bovary*, say, to *Un Amour de Swann* or Radiguet's *Diable au Corps?*

PETER QUENNELL

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* *Great French Romances.* With an Introduction by RICHARD ALDINGTON. *Pilot Press.* 15s.

THE DISCIPLINED READER

Explorations : Essays in Criticism mainly on the literature of the seventeenth century. By L. C. Knights. *Chatto and Windus.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Dr. L. C. Knights' book consists of a number of essays in literary criticism. He is a distinguished member of a school of criticism which is sometimes erroneously described as " the Cambridge School." Dr. Knights is a co-editor of *Scrutiny,* and this periodical is the principal organ through which the ideas of the school are disseminated. Most of the contributors are Cambridge men and their view is deeply indebted to Dr. I. A. Richards' *Principles of Literary Criticism* and *Practical Criticism,* as well as to the critical writings of Mr. T. S. Eliot. The school is a product of Cambridge, but it does not represent the study of English at that university ; it is narrower in taste and more dogmatic in judgment than is its Alma Mater. Mr. Knights' book affords an opportunity to pay homage to the admirable virtues of this Cambridge minority, as well as to point to some of the faults which alienate even those who recognise those virtues.

Mr. Knights tells us in the Preface to this volume that :

> Literary criticism is a form of disciplined exploration—exploration, in the first place, of words in a certain arrangement. The main function of criticism is to prompt other readers to fresh insights, based on fresh disciplined explorations of their own.

The value of this kind of criticism, which involves a rigorous re-examination of the text, is unquestionable. Its danger is that it may lose a sense of the whole while it scrutinises the parts ; and, above all, that the insistence on " discipline " may obscure the more important experience of delight—that joy of the creator which is communicated to the reader, however painful the theme may be, and whatever effort may have been necessary before it became " a thing of beauty." The emphasis on discipline is also, perhaps, responsible for a certain air of self-righteousness and of contempt for others which often accompanies puritanic and self-abnegating creeds. The tone of the comments on Dr. Dover Wilson's edition of *Hamlet* illustrates what is meant : " One cannot indeed be sure that Dr. Wilson understands the nature of Elizabethan English or Shakespeare's handling of it " ; and : " Obviously there are years of labour behind these volumes, but the labour that poetry demands is of a different order." The " puritanism " of this school has, however, an even more serious consequence than disdain for other kinds of criticism. It has unduly narrowed the conception of good literature so that the scrutineers have little relish for the Romantic poets, or even for Milton, and confine their appreciation to such poetry as rewards the search for ambiguities and the microscopic examination of " words in a certain arrangement."

Four of the essays in this volume are about Shakespeare. The first is an article called *How many Children had Lady Macbeth,* originally printed by the Minority Press, Cambridge, in 1933. This essay is an attack on that type of Shakespearean criticism which explored the characters in the plays and culminated in Dr. A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy.* Dr. Knights confesses in his Preface that he can now " detect a slight headiness springing from the exhilaration of attacking what was still the orthodox academic view of Shakespeare," and that " Time has confirmed the impression I registered then (in a note omitted from the present reprint) that 'a preoccupation with imagery and symbols, unless minutely controlled by a sensitive intelligence directed upon the text, can lead to abstractions almost as dangerous as does preoccupation with " character." ' " But " sensitive intelligence " must be directed not only upon the text but on the means of communication that Shakespeare had in mind, that is performance in a theatre. There is still a tendency in Dr. Knights' Shakespearean studies to ignore the conditions of the theatre and to write as though the text of the plays should be read in precisely the same way as we should read a poem :

> We start with so many lines of verse on a printed page which we read as we should any other poem.

The essay on Prince Hamlet (1940) still shows a tendency to abstract a particular speech from the accumulating total impression of the play that an audience in the theatre receives. The tragedy of *Hamlet* depends upon our sense of the " noble mind o'erthrown," and any examination of Hamlet's speeches which over-emphasises his " cruelty, self-righteousness and moral relaxation " to the exclusion of that nobility indicates that the total tragic effect of the play has been lost sight of. The essay may, nevertheless, provide a valuable corrective to the opposite view of the Prince as " the most adorable of heroes."

The four essays on Shakespeare are followed by four seventeenth-century studies of which the first, *Bacon and the Seventeenth-Century Dissociation of Sensibility,* is the most valuable. Dr. Knights uses Bacon to illustrate the narrowing of attention to the verifiable fact, and of the virtues of good writing to unambiguous statement, for which Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* was partly responsible. His differentiation between Shakespeare's and Bacon's use of language is illuminating, and his plea that we should not now abandon reason because we have become " aware of the limitations of scientific rationalism " is important and timely. Dr. Knights closes with three essays on Henry James, on W. B. Yeats and on the University Teaching of English and History respectively. Although each of these is of interest, and the defence of Henry James against the attack of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks is particularly discerning, one is sorry that Dr. Knights did not reprint his valuable essay on " Elizabethan Education and Drama " even at the sacrifice of these modern studies. The relevance of that essay to his Shakespearean and seventeenth-century studies would have added to the value of the book.

Joan Bennett

NEW NOVELS

Aurélien. By Louis Aragon. *Pilot Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Judgment in Suspense. By Gerald Bullett. *Dent.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

In addition to these two, I must have read, half-read or merely sampled, a dozen recent novels during the fortnight. All were hopelessly disfigured either by facetiousness or by a painful, girding intensity quite out of proportion to the matter in hand. I am left with the impression that novels are written only by saloon-bar wags and persons on the verge of nervous breakdown. And I conclude that the most important thing about a novel is its mood or temper. A right detachment combined with a right gravity, poise, a discreet irony, these seem to be the first essentials. Mr. Bullett has them. In the adult Aragon a roaring boy is crying to be let out.

It is partly a national difference. *Aurélien* is full of that cut-and-dried French psychology of passion which appeared so impressive in extreme youth and which now seldom fails to get a laugh. " The only certain homage a man can receive comes from the prostitute who refuses money. This is axiomatic . . ." Paul Bourget might have said it. " She wasn't quite as full-bosomed as he liked, but still . . . He

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tried to imagine what Mme Floresse's thighs were like . . ." Wondering what Mme Floresse's thighs are like occupies a good deal of the book. Finding out occupies a good deal more. The whole of *Judgment in Suspense* consists of progressive schoolmaster Heywood's wonderings, but oddly enough the details of Mrs. Shenley's anatomy are the one thing that never crosses his mind.

Aurélien Leurtillois, a big, handsome fellow, fastidious about his person and inclined to brood over life in the trenches, is thirty when, in 1921, he meets Bérénice, wife of a provincial chemist and cousin of Edmond Barbentane, a captain of industry, who lived in the same trench. Reluctantly and to his astonishment, Aurélien falls in love with Bérénice and she with him. They drift through Paris for pages and pages, getting into the wrong beds and missing each other like anything. Bérénice lives for a while with a young poet who is later stabbed in a street brawl. Barbentane crashes and ruins Aurélien, who however, makes a good marriage and settles down in Lille. In an epilogue which begins on page 690, Aurélien and Bérénice meet again in 1940, and a German bullet passes through Aurélien's arm into Bérénice's body. She dies on page 750. There are many complications, but, if a plot is a meaningful structure, no plot. It is difficult to get at the author's intention.

Aurélien fails to make the grade politically. In flight from the Germans, he still resents the presence of a Spanish republican refugee in the house of a neighbour of Bérénice's one-armed chemist husband. He behaves naturally with a young working-man at a public baths, but grows maudlin at regimental dinners and demonstrates on the wrong side in 1934. Yet this and its cognate themes, the aimlessness of Aurélien's way of life and his helpless entanglement in shady finance, occur intermittently and without integral relation to the rest. This is not a political book.

Avant-garde poets and artists litter the scene. Picasso, Cocteau, Diaghilev, are mentioned repeatedly, and a number of minor characters appear to be satirical portraits. The finest passage in the book describes the aged, half-blind Claude Monet's house at Giverny, where the gardeners work by night to spare the painter the sight of withering flowers. There are smart parties, private views and back-stage intrigues. Aurélien moves through them all unseeing. It is not a book about the *Zeitgeist*. Nor is it a book about Paris. There are good set-pieces on the river and carefully used symbolism of death by drowning. Aurélien has in his room a widely sold death-mask taken from a girl fished out of the Seine. His friends perceive before he does that it resembles Bérénice. In the course of the narrative, another unknown girl is fished out, her ring-finger cut off. It could have been Bérénice. Bérénice breaks the mask and has it replaced by an impression of her own face with closed eyes. The Seine bend at the Ile Saint-Louis is compared to the median vein. Yet there is more of Paris in a page of *Les Yeux d'Elsa* than in the whole of this corpulent work. There is more of the war that ended in 1918 ("*O revenants bleus de Vimy vingt ans après . . .*"). There is more to the point about human love. Yet, if sheer weight of paper counts, *Aurélien* is a book about love.

Aragon's general position is an odd one. Like two finer artists in his own time, Gide and Valéry, he has been conspicuous less for concrete, enumerable achievements than for attitudes sketched out and examples set to the young. At a low estimate, his genius has been that of a cultural organiser. His finest hour was the German occupation. *Le Crève-Coeur* and *Les Yeux d'Elsa* showed us during that black night a figure of uncommon lustre. As Baudelaire fused crude sex with religion in a final romantic determination to outrage the Philistines, so Aragon now made his myth of a kinder love fused with that other long unfashionable source of Paretan "residues," *la Patrie*. He began to speak of France in accents with which no Englishman would dare to speak of England. The lustre dims. A public figure, Aragon now adjudicates the wartime behaviour of other writers and gives out bulls of excommunication from the Comité National. On the whole the translation by Eithne Wilkins is good.

Mr. Bullett is not a public figure, but he is an established writer. If one is not of the same generation, I suppose one always under-estimates established writers who do not happen to be fashionable. I certainly under-estimated Mr. Bullett. In a novel like this, one never pauses to admire the writing. It is transparent, graceful and occasionally marred by the commonplace, a vehicle intended for performance. *Judgment in Suspense* is a set task brilliantly discharged. Aragon ploughs his way through selected nightmares with surprisingly little effect. Mr. Bullett frightens us by gaily lifting the lid off a seemingly normal situation between a group of comfortable, well-bred people.

A divorced wife calls at a school and asks to see her son to whom she is legally and by the guardian's express word denied access. She is pretty, and the headmaster spends his vocation quixotically pursuing the rights and wrongs of the case at his club, at the guardian's house, by correspondence and in a restaurant. The father, a distinguished medico, is dead. The situation between him, his divorced wife and his maiden sister is placed in a light no less blinding for being ambiguous. Heywood's solution (I scruple to disclose it) is improbable. For instance, surely the child Rosalind would observe that Mrs. Shenley had now oddly become Mrs. Kent? But the book is closed on a rising inflexion and every issue left tremulously in doubt.

Mr. Bullett has written ethical thrillers before. *The Jury* was an ethical thriller of massive construction. *Judgment in Suspense* is slighter and, I think, better. I compared it, as I read, with Rosamond Lehmann's *The Ballad and the Source* where also the inquiry from first page to last is whether Mrs. Jardine is a good or bad woman. Miss Lehmann, if you take her page by page, is a more richly endowed writer than Mr. Bullett. Her eye and ear are quicker. She is aware of wider implications. Nevertheless, the specific task was less expertly handled in *The Ballad and the Source*. Too heavily charged with poetry, it exploded into three books, a novel of childhood, the proposed inquiry and a garish, wonderful melodrama. Mr. Bullett exhibits the virtues of limitation, of known gifts properly deployed.

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ment, but almost entirely through the efforts of two merchants, Grigor Shelekhov and Aleksandr Andrevich Baranov, the latter of whom is the subject of Mr. Chevigny's fascinating, admirably told and richly documented book.

What led Shelekhov to Kodiak Island off the Alaskan mainland in 1784 was what had led so many Siberians to make foraging raids on the Aleutians during the half century before: the quest for furs, which were Russia's principal export to China. But he had something else in mind beside furs. Russian activity on the coast had already stirred the English, French and Spanish to action; hence Cook's explorations; hence the fortification of San Francisco Bay by the Spanish. His aim was to forestall them by establishing permanent Russian settlements on the American mainland, this despite Catherine the Great's tart observation, "England's experience with American colonies should be a warning to other nations to abstain from such efforts."

Shelekhov remained at his settlement at Three Saints Bay, on Kodiak Island, for four years, and then had to return to Russia. It was necessary for someone to take his place. Baranov did not want to go, but he was heavily in debt, and there was no one else.

Everything was against him when he sailed in 1790. Born on the borders of Finland, entirely self-educated, he was little higher than a peasant in the Russian system of rank; he had been a fur-trader in Siberia, but was ineligible for membership of the merchants' guilds. His presence was not imposing; he knew nothing of navigation. And he was already forty-two. He agreed to go out for five years; he stayed for the rest of his life.

For years everything continued to go against him. His men were insubordinate, drunken, unreliable, often rebellious. Supplies were always short, always late in arriving, and Shelekhov, a tortuous person, cheated him continually. And all the time there were constant factors to contend against, the climate and the Indians. To set against these ever-present difficulties was the character of the man himself; he united enormous will-power with a genius for improvisation, an eminently practical mind that in other circumstances might have made him the peer of men like Watt and Boulton and Erasmus Darwin, a pioneer in the applied sciences. He was fortunate, too, in one assistant, an English seaman named Shields, who taught him navigation and with whom, in the face of what appeared unsurmountable obstacles—unsuitable woods, an almost total lack of iron—he built a ship. The colonists sent out to him by Shelekhov were thoroughly useless—serfs and monks—but he founded New Archangel five hundred miles farther down the coast. Indians wiped it out; he bided his time, subdued them, and built again.

Baranov was in Alaska for twenty-eight years. During that time he increased the value of the Russian America Company by five and a half million gold roubles and had established settlements all along the coast and even as far south as California. In his capital, New Archangel, he entertained visiting sea-captains royally; he was —the description is Washington Irving's—"a rough, rugged, hard-drinking old Russian; somewhat of a soldier, somewhat of a trader; above all a boon companion of the old roystering school, with a strong cross of the bear." He was proud of his library and his piano, which he had had sent to him from Boston, proud of his son and daughter by his Indian wife, above all, proud of the title of nobility that had been conferred on him—he had become equal in rank of no less than a colonel. And in the North West he was a potentate in his own right, on terms of something like alliance with other potentates, such as Kamehameha, King of the Sandwich Islands, and John Jacob Astor. But the age of private enterprise was over; the Imperial Navy was taking over Russian America and a naval officer sent to become governor. Nobody liked to tell Baranov; partly out of consideration for the old man, partly because he was suspected of embezzling the Company's funds, and it was necessary not to arouse his suspicions. In fact, to his other virtues Baranov added complete integrity. So, in the end, he was awkwardly and gracelessly pushed off the stage he had held so brilliantly for twenty-eight years. He died at Batavia, *en route* for Russia, on April 13th, 1819. He had given the Tsar an empire; and sixty-eight years later another Tsar sold it to the United States for seven million dollars.

WALTER ALLEN

POLITICAL RELIGION

History is on Our Side: A Contribution to Political Religion and Scientific Faith. By JOSEPH NEEDHAM, F.R.S. *Allen and Unwin.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This interesting collection of essays and addresses, which includes a sermon and a broadcast talk, may be said, in a Pickwickian sense, to have the fire of God in it; like the Russian Revolution. Mr. Needham is less violent than the Revolution, but he is inspired with the same passion for the religion of practical comradeship, of love. This, as he insists, is also the essential spirit of Christianity. "Here and Now," he says, "is the eternal life, the life of love and comradeship. Heaven is where there is Fellowship." Yes, emphatically! But in dismissing the whole impulse toward mysticism as merely an anti-social aberration, he misses the chance of a fertile synthesis. Flagrant indeed is the error of individual withdrawal in search of mere individual salvation, whether in a life after death or in introverted beatitude here and now; but the extreme of extraversion, drowning the self in the flux of events, falls short both of fullness of individual being and of the most valuable social service. No doubt, to be a true saint you must also be in some sense an active revolutionary; but conversely, to be the best kind of revolutionary you must contrive to be, on one side of your nature, a contemplative saint. Otherwise you will be in danger of becoming too ready to use any kind of brutality to further your revolutionary ends. If brutality becomes customary, much harm will be done to the precious tradition of human kindness, and the Revolution may be fatally poisoned. By one means only is this disaster to be avoided, namely by earnest contemplation of the experience of comradeship, of love. Only if this contemplation reaches a certain depth, will it keep one faithful to the pure spirit of the Revolution. And if it has that depth, it will inevitably have a quality deserving the adjective "mystical."

Mr. Needham says, "It will always remain a personal question how far a man can bring himself to go in the pursuance of political aims which, while themselves demonstrably correct, may involve much immediate suffering." This suggests that the deterrent is mere private squeamishness, which *ought* to be resisted. Now it may often be necessary to do evil that good may follow; but the refusal to overstep certain limits may spring not from squeamishness but from the affirmation of the personality in its most awake state that this thing must not in any circumstances be done, because it is in some sense "a sin against the spirit," and must inevitably do more harm than good. Those who are afraid of the word "spirit" may translate it by "the most developed moral perception current in the particular society."

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History, Mr. Needham says, is on our side, in the sense that circumstances force us increasingly to organise; and organisation is what we need. True! But without a strong passion for the fostering of individuality in all men, organisation may go bad on us, and produce a mere hive of robots. Mr. Needham probably realises this, but he does not emphasise it. Organisation, after all, is a means, not an end, a means to fulness of individual life, or better to fulness of individuality-in-community.

Unfortunately I have now no space to deal with the many excellent things in this book, with the admirable summary of evolution, the analysis of the effects of Nazism on German science, the discussion of university democracy, or the rambling, erudite, but charming, account of Cambridge in summer-time. OLAF STAPLEDON

RE-CREATION THROUGH ART

Art and Regeneration. By MARIA PETRIE. *Paul Elek.* 12s. 6d.

It is to the discredit of English education that if Scripture has been the Cinderella, the arts and crafts have long been the neglected ugly sisters of the school time-table. Utilitarian objections, pressure of other subjects, and the high proportion of teachers in this field who are quite unsuitable for the work they profess, share the responsibility. It has taken years to kill the old tradition that art means copying either from pictures or models, and to establish free painting as the expression of that creative ability which is common to all children. Parents have sniffed disdainfully because children's work looks like doodling, and conservatives have suspected guts-burrowing. Some fanatical teachers withhold help in mastering technical problems through excessive zeal for individual freedom of expression. There have been great teachers who knew how to bring to birth the child's own idea by advice and encouragement—Willi Soukop at Blundell's, and Claude Rogers at Raynes Park were such, and Mrs. Petrie at Abbotsholme is clearly another. This book of hers is arresting, challenging and timely. She writes earnestly, and with such a missionary zeal that at times "the lady doth protest too much, methinks." But she punches home her points with many an apt phrase, and unlike many books of the kind there is little here of what the Americans call "hokum."

Mrs. Petrie is making revolutionary claims for art in education. Tired of seeing the subject as a tolerated poor relation, allowed to sit in brief and draughty discomfort just inside the school door, she wants half the educational kingdom. Panting hard along the trail blazed by Mr. Herbert Read, but more helpful in practical suggestion, she claims that "art is the best educator and healer of men." Human society, having reached a dead end, and drained of vitality, can be healed and made to put forth new shoots, through the arts. She sees "that happiness and glow" of successful creation helping to solve the new menace of enforced leisure. In a declining civilisation with "Christianity in exile," she wants to enlist all discontents in what Mr. Waugh in another context once called Creative Endeavour. Art can create character and enlarge sensitivity which will enrich all human contacts. If her solution for present ills is an over-simplification, her demonstration of the healing power of arts and crafts for the physically handicapped and the morally abnormal is triumphantly convincing. No praise can be too high for the reproductions which clinch her case better than a whole spate of words. The three photographs of a doll made by a maniacal man in the Leicester City Mental Hospital are in themselves enough to prove the therapeutic value of craft work.

The book happily coincides with the publication of The Visual Arts Inquiry, and with the adoption of the Norwood Report. This latter will make possible a more elastic curriculum, and the arts with all their binding and civilising power may at last win a place equal to their importance. But there will be a fight, for art in this country "never is, but always to be blessed." Educationalists sometimes listen to new ideas, but having "heard great Argument . . . come out by the same Door as in they went." If the recommendations in the chapter on the training of Art Teachers were alone acted upon, the standard of art would be sensibly improved. This book is full of effective ammunition for the fight which lies ahead, if Mrs. Petrie's ideas are to get the consideration they merit. JOHN GARRETT

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka.* London Symphony Orch., cond. Ansermet (Decca K1388–92).

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Job: A Masque for Dancing.* B.B.C. Symphony Orch., cond. Boult (H.M.V. DB6289–93).

FALLA: *The Three-Cornered Hat.* Philharmonia Orch., cond. Alceo Galliera (Col. DX1258–9).

HANDEL-BEECHAM: *The Great Elopement.* London Philharmonic Orch., cond. Beecham (H.M.V. DB6295–7).

GAVIN GORDON: *The Rake's Progress.* Royal Opera House Orch. cond. Lambert (Col. DX1249).

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphony in A maj.* ("Italian"). National Symphony Orch., cond. Unger (Decca K1370–3).

RACHMANINOFF: *Third Piano Concerto.* Cyril Smith with City of Birmingham Orch., cond. Weldon (Col. DX1251–5).

BEETHOVEN: *Overture: Leonora No. 2.* Concertgebouw Orch. of Amsterdam, cond. Van Beinum (Decca K1431–2).

WEBER: *Overture: Der Freischütz.* Philharmonia Orch., cond. Süsskind (Col. DX1244).

THOMAS: *Overture: Mignon.* National Symphony Orch., cond. Fistoulari (Decca K1166).

HEROLD: *Overture: Zampa.* London Philharmonic Orch., cond. Cameron (Decca K1453).

ELGAR: *Sea Pictures.* Gladys Ripley, with Philharmonia Orch., cond. Weldon (H.M.V. C3498–500).

MOZART: "Deh vieni, non tardar" (*Figaro*), and "Come scoglio" (*Cosí fan Tutte*). Hjördis Schymberg with orch. (H.M.V. DB6294).

WEBER: "Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster" (*Oberon*). Joan Hammond with Philharmonia Orch., cond. Tausky (H.M.V. C3493).

GLUCK: "What is Life?" (*Orpheus*) and HANDEL: "Art Thou Troubled?" (*Rodelinda*). Kathleen Ferrier with London Symphony Orch., cond. Sargent (Decca K1466).

GIORDANO: "Come un bel dì" (*Andrea Chenier*) and "Amor ti vieta" (*Fedora*). Jussy Björling with orch. (H.M.V. DA1836).

CHOPIN: *Fourth Ballade in F minor.* Solomon (H.M.V. C3403).

DEBUSSY: *Toccata,* and RAVEL: *Toccata.* Moiseiwitch (H.M.V. C3487).

I must apologise to regular readers of these Notes for the unusually large gap since the last instalment. The fact is that present circumstances are hostile to the record reviewer, because the output of reproducers has not (owing to the war) kept pace with the advance in recording technique. A number of up-to-date electrical reproducers are due to appear on the market at any moment, but at present the connoisseur is reduced to uncomfortable alternatives: to make do with pre-war radiograms and acoustic gramophones which, however satisfactory they may have been up to 1939, are incapable of coping with the latest English and American recordings; to have a "high fidelity" instrument specially built, at vast expense, by an expert, only to find that the result,

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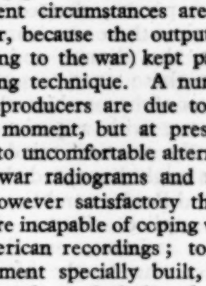

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although on occasion superb, has the same kind of disadvantages as a racing car.

Having reached—at least temporarily—the goal of a perilous journey in these regions, I am in a position to state, without feeling much doubt about it, that the new issue of *Petrouchkha* belongs among the contemporary triumphs of recording. Even at the opening, where the music is actually designed to invoke a picture of labyrinthine disorder, the ear finds no difficulty in following any particular strand in the fabric; and in the "solo" scenes the humorous and original orchestration is astonishingly well realised. M. Ansermet's tempi and dynamics are of course as authentic as possible. As long as the present craze for ballet lasts I suppose we must expect a great deal of this kind of suite to be recorded; but it cannot, I think, be denied that most ballet music palls quickly when deprived of the spectacle which it is intended to animate. This is true, to some extent, even of such transcendent examples of the art as *Petrouchkha* and *The Three Cornered Hat*; how much truer, then, of *The Rake's Progress*, which never rises above skilful pastiche, and of Sir Thomas Beecham's latest raid on the Handel country. *Job* is in different case, since its qualities are those of a symphonic poem rather than those of an ordinary ballet. As an essay in the opposing forces of Good and Evil, *Job* precedes the Fourth Symphony by five years; but draws upon the same stock of musical imagery. There are, of course, many noble and dramatic pages in the score, but it is possible to feel that the whole thing is pretty consistently below the composer's highest standard of inspiration. The orchestral texture, which is for the most part on the plushy side, does not come over particularly well in recording. With no very positive faults, this set suffers from a general haziness and lack of clarity which place it below many of H.M.V.'s recent achievements. Some of the more lightly scored numbers—*e.g.* the Minuet—sound very well; but this is emphatically not a work to be heard otherwise than entire, for the spiritual progress of the story is too organically conceived for the parts to have much separate meaning.

The suite from *The Three Cornered Hat* is conducted with an incisiveness and rhythmic punch that astonish, but the physical impact of the recording is far from pleasant. Quite apart from aesthetic considerations, to play this set properly is hardly feasible, for while a fibre needle would break down at once, a steel one would inevitably tear the heavily printed surface to pieces in a few playings; and how many people yet have featherweight pick-ups with sapphire or diamond points? There is no denying the excellence of the playing, but the suitability of violence in music of this sort should not blind one to the degree of distortion involved by such a reckless recording as this. Neither *The Rake's Progress* nor *The Great Elopement* is open to the same objections, for both are recorded with circumspection. Sir Thomas Beecham's ballet, which deals with Beau Nash, Sheridan and the beautiful Miss Linley, is full of pretty things; but the levity with which Handel's originals are treated, in points of style, will not recommend itself to musicians, and in other respects, too, I feel that this suite is inferior to former medleys put together by Sir Thomas.

The new set of the "Italian" Symphony is in many ways to be preferred to Koussevitsky's: Dr. Unger does not rush the first movement off its feet, and (except in the Trio of the Minuet, where a most important bassoon part is inaudible, thereby making nonsense of the harmony) the sparkling clarity of the whole delightful score is maintained from start to finish. But—and it is a big "but"—the violin tone in this set is almost as disagreeable as the sound made by singing through a tooth-comb. This can be mitigated by cutting out the higher frequencies, on radiograms that have this device, but the effect of real string tone cannot be achieved by such expedients.

Comparison of Rachmaninoff's assumption of the solo part in his own *Third Concerto*, with that of Cyril Smith in the same work, is on the whole to the latter's disadvantage; but the matter does not rest there. To begin with, in the American recording the orchestral part is not nearly so clear as in the English; in the former set the climaxes are badly muddled, whereas in the latter even the biggest tutti are capably managed. Mr. Smith is at his best in the Interlude; not quite steel-fingered enough to cope triumphantly with the Finale, he takes the second subject with an increase of speed of which it is difficult to see the point. All things considered, I doubt whether this concerto comes off at all successfully outside the concert-hall: we need to be arrested by the drama of occasion and personality, in order to get pleasure from the spun-glass pianism without wearying of the endless inflated sequences.

Closely to confront *Leonora* Nos. 2 and 3 (No. 2 was the first to be composed) is to become absorbingly aware of the processes of genius; and now that this new and fine recording of No. 2 has appeared, musical people are strongly urged to make the comparison, with the aid of Tovey's masterly analysis. Here it must suffice to say that, although symphonically, perhaps, less consummate than No. 3, No. 2 is nevertheless a magnificently dramatic overture, and that it contains many points of difference from the later version which are in themselves interesting and beautiful. The spacious and thrilling effect of really well balanced orchestral forces, led with authority, in a sufficiently resonant studio, makes this issue an outstanding one. The only complaint I have is that my own copy has a heavy surface.

What would probably have been the best extant recording of the overture to *Der Freischütz* is to some extent impaired by the upper strings, which sound thin and weedy. Otherwise the disc is to be recommended, for the brass and wind playing is excellent, and the conduct of the piece as a whole is what we have come to recognise as the only possible one. Indeed, nobody nowadays expects or desires "new" interpretations of the three last overtures on my list. *Mignon* is, I think, preferable in the new issue, because the recording is, from every point of view, brighter and more realistic than Toscanini's, although the latter manages to create a good deal more "atmosphere" than Fistoulari. Neither here nor in *Zampa* do we ever feel that we are in an opera-house, or indeed anywhere except facing a loudspeaker. However, *Zampa* is tough enough to stand up to anything. It is impossible not to feel affection for this rip-roaring piece, with its glaring high spirits, its one lovely air (the oboe melody near the beginning), and its light-hearted use of any old formula that comes to hand. One would no more think of criticising *Zampa* than of blaming a pageant for lack of dramatic subtlety. It would be almost beside the point to suggest that the new recording is a bit noisy, since that is in fact how the music is intended to sound.

If Elgar had maintained throughout the cycle the standard of invention and taste for which the first of his *Sea Pictures* is remarkable, this work might have counted among his finest. I hope I shall not be thought priggish if I suggest that after the first song the music degenerates into sentimentality, archness ("Where Corals Lie") and provincial sublimity. On the other hand, I can assure those who disagree, to some extent or entirely, with this judgment that the performance and recording are extremely fine. The orchestral part, though heavily and elaborately scored, is never flattened out, nor does it overwhelm Miss Ripley's opulent tones.

Four very formidable arias . . . Mme Schymberg has a beautiful, "white" voice, perhaps a shade too impassive for music as fervid as *Deh vieni* and *Come scoglio*. But her vocal technique is admirable and the accompaniment most agreeably crisp and sweet. A disc to buy. Few modern sopranos can scale the cliffs of "Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster," and Miss Hammond is not be be blamed for failing to give us entire satisfaction in the more tremendous staves of this aria. But her singing of the milder and less taxing passages is among the best things she has given

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